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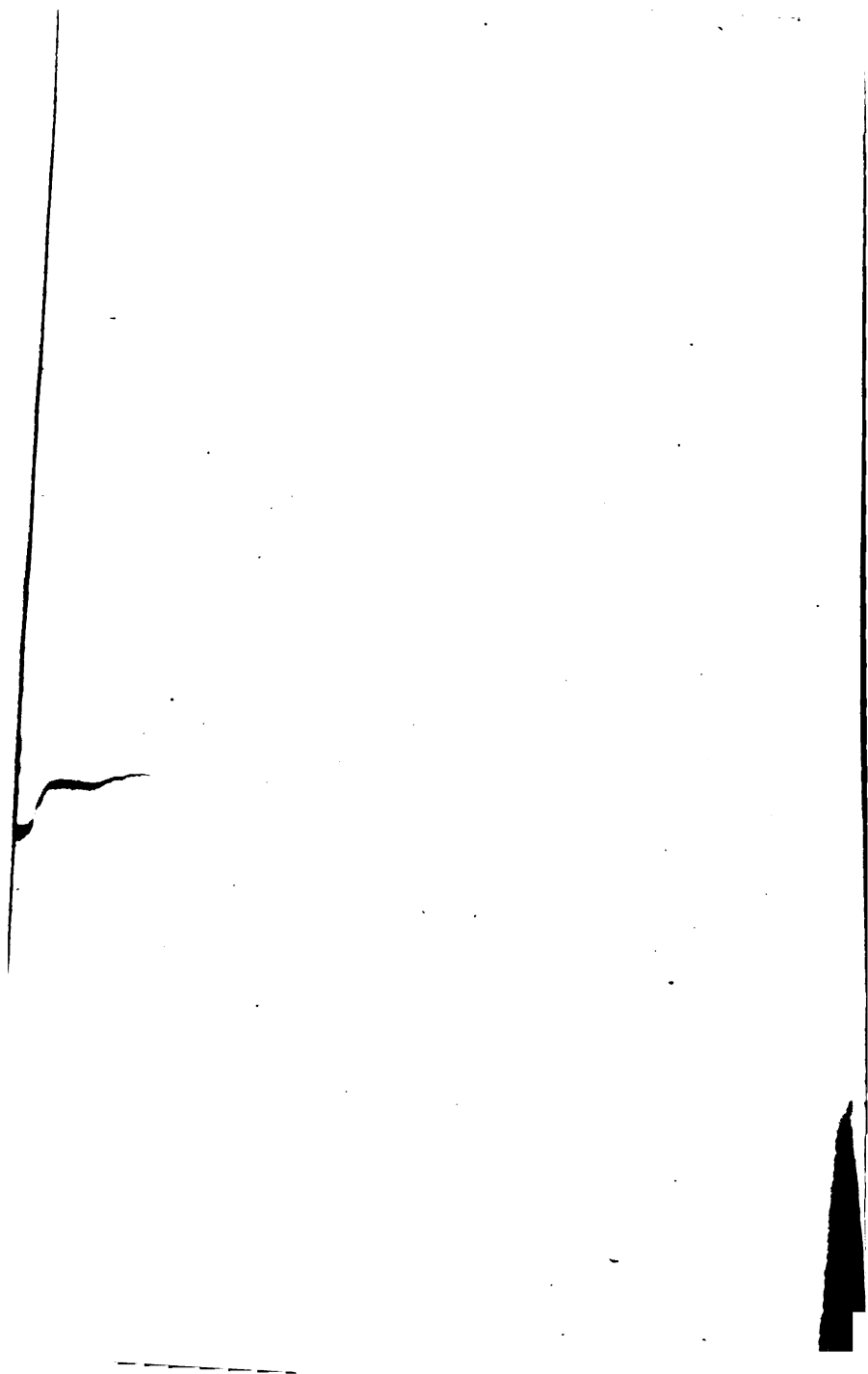


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THE  
ETHICS OF POSITIVISM:  
A  
CRITICAL STUDY.

BY  
GIACOMO BARZELLOTTI,

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY AT THE LICEO DANTE, FLORENCE.

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NEW YORK:  
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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

IN introducing to the American public this book, which is published in English for the first time, principally through the kind initiative and intelligent coöperation of Miss Ida Lilian Olcott, I deem it necessary to refer to the occasion and time of its production, to its purpose and to the considerations which have led me to comply with the kind request of the translators, with the hope that their work would prove of some use and pleasure to the students of Philosophy.

Although the *Ethics of Positivism*<sup>1</sup> is one of those works which treat of questions of general scientific interest, there is a certain occasion for

<sup>1</sup> *La morale nella filosofia positiva*; studio critico di Giacomo Barzellotti, Professore di Filosofia nel Regio Liceo Dante di Firenze. M. Cellini e C., Florence, 1871.

them, as it is seen from the form in which they are conceived, and from the motives which inspire them. It was originally published by installments during the years 1870 and 1871 in *La Filosofia delle Scuole Italiane*, a philosophical periodical founded by the illustrious philosopher Terenzio Mamiani. From the first I denominated my work a *critical study*, with the aim of defending, in the first place, the principles of Morality against the attacks of an empirical Utilitarianism. This I have endeavored to do without any theological postulate, but on what I conceive to be the grounds of absolute obligation, and showing, by a broad and impartial criticism of the opposite doctrines, that those of the above referred to school have not, as yet, proved that a system of morality can be established on scientific bases. In the second place, I wished to present to the Italian public a sufficiently exact account of the most important results which empirical Psychology had reached through the latest investigations of the facts of the moral world. It is clear that, in order that I might succeed in my double

purpose, it was necessary that I should make the doctrines of the English experimental school the principal subject of my critical study. It is the only school in Europe which had previously, and at that time also, applied the principles of the scientific method to all the departments of Philosophy, and particularly to Psychology and Morality; and freely following the traditions of Locke, Hume and Hartley, that school pursued a path which led it every day farther from the so-called *Positive* course of Auguste Comte. This profound difference of origin and direction, which distinguishes the doctrines of the French philosopher from those of John Stuart Mill, Alexander Bain, Herbert Spencer and other English psychologists was not for a long time sufficiently recognized in my country. When I wrote in the original the following pages, the doctrines of Positivism were hardly known here; all that was heard of them being through the reports of the discussions which they were at that time exciting in France. There was not then in this country a school, properly so called, which professed

them with unity of principles and convictions, or with a full comprehension of its own method. In the name of *Positivism* was confounded, as there still is by many, different and even opposed philosophical directions, provided that there was implied in them the exclusion of old metaphysical notions ; no distinction being made between Materialism and the Empiricism of physiologists with whom Comte was in accord, and the doctrines of the English experimental school which refused, and still refuses, to be known as *Positive*. As I have remarked, the doctrines of this school were not well known in Italy at that time, so that confusion was inevitable. The majority of Italian readers were wanting in serious philosophical training, in that fine sense of modern scientific tendency which is necessary to properly comprehend the position, or, rather, the decided attitude, of the English school of experimentalists in the history of contemporary philosophy, in relation to the two extremes in Europe, of materialism on one hand, and metaphysical and theological dogmatism on the other.

One of the principal ends I had in view

when I undertook to write this work was, therefore, to dissipate the strange confusion of criteria and conceptions which appeared to exist in the minds of Positivists, at least of those who called themselves such in Italy ; and, while I had to sincerely reject most of the doctrines of that school, I had to at once combat and represent them, so that they would be better understood and appreciated in Italy, at least in their most prominent features, in the spirit and depth of their method. I wanted thus to put them before my countrymen *in that true point of historical perspective* to which they belong, distinguishing them more especially from the Empiricism of physiologists and from the Positive school as founded by Auguste Comte. While the above avowed purpose still makes my book, in one sense, opportune in Italy, I trust it will not make it appear altogether inopportune in America, where, I doubt not, a mere exposition of the Positive doctrines is no longer so necessary as it is in some other countries.

The occasion and purpose of the book sug-

gested its title. But I cannot but remark that the appellation of *Positivism*, which I gave to the Philosophy which I then proposed to examine, was commented upon as inexact by the eminent writers who criticised the work in the leading reviews of both England and Germany. It is not necessary to say that such a philosophy I found represented principally by the English school, for I believe I have sufficiently shown it in the course of my discussion. I wish to refer to two of those critics, for whom I have a deep sense of gratitude. They are Mr. Herbert Spencer, who alluded to this book in the eighth chapter of his *Study of Sociology*; and the distinguished author of the *Methods of Ethics*, Professor Sidgwick, who criticised it at length in the *Academy* for July 1, 1872. The remarks of the latter were at once favorable and truly severe, and I have not failed to profit by them, inasmuch as I have ratified with pleasure some errors into which I had fallen. I have not, however, changed the title of the book, in order that it might not lose any of the character of what I would



call *local opportunity* which it received from the occasion on which I wrote it, and from the special intellectual conditions of Italian readers, which it presupposed and on which it was intended to act. The term *Positivism*, with which I designated also the doctrines of the English experimental school, was then one of the terms most used in Italy to signify those doctrines. Although I admit that the word was misused in this sense, I accepted it *provisionally*, and only to make myself understood by those for whom the book was more especially intended; while it was my purpose, at the same time, to substitute a very clear and precise notion of the subject itself for the provisionally and inaccurate meaning of the word.

It seems to me to be necessary that I should reply briefly to the grave criticism which the authoritative author, to whom I have before alluded, published in the *Academy* of London. He imputes to me that I have been led to mistakes through the authority of Mr. Lecky, from whose fine *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne* I quote a few words.

The blunder which the distinguished Professor believes I have made is that I have confounded "the egotistic and universalistic Hedonism under the common term of Utilitarianism," and in considering "the ethical controversy that extends from Socrates to the present time as a dialogue between *two* schools of thought, 'Intuitivists' and 'Utilitarians'"; which mistake, Professor Sidgwick says, has caused me to fall into the other error of considering "the difference between Epicurus, Hobbes and Helvetius, on the one hand, and Bentham and Comte, on the other, as quite secondary and subordinate." Now, to me, it seems that Professor Sidgwick has perhaps not sufficiently noticed how my polemic, as a whole, against Utilitarianism, and my exposition of the controversy on the moral question as it was agitated in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, make it clear that, in appreciating the respective value of the various doctrines and their historical relations, I follow—in conformity to the nature and to the principal aim of my work—an essentially theoretical mode of criticism, and that this con-

sists, for me, in the impossibility of deducing the binding force of human acts from the conception of the useful or of happiness in any sense in which we may understand it; for, such a conception, as Professor Sidgwick himself observes in his *Methods of Ethics*, can never be well defined, and, besides, it expresses, in my opinion, the *effect* of moral action, and not its *end* or *rule*. From all this it is easy to see, I believe, that from the theoretical point of view, which I assumed, only two principles could appear to me originally distinct and irreducible, viz.: the principle of absolute obligation, and the *opposite* principle of relative or conditional obligation—the principle of happiness, of the useful, of interest, whether general or individual. The dualism of these principles, hence of the schools which represent them, does not appear in this work as a postulate which I accept without control, or as if it was received by the authority of sentiment or opinion outside of science. For me it is rather the consequence of what I try to demonstrate throughout this discussion, in which the opposition between the principle

N.B.

N.S.

Yes

of the *absolute obligation* and the principle of utility and happiness implies almost two contradictions, without the possibility of a middle term, so that the distinction between egotistic Hedonism and universalistic Hedonism should have appeared in it only as a subdivision of the second of those two principles. It certainly is a most important subdivision, but it is neither substantial nor original, inasmuch as I endeavor to show that, owing to the impossibility of well defining universal utility, and setting it down as a certain and *obligatory* rule of moral conduct, the only criterion by which the individual is naturally led to value the good of others can not be drawn from anything but his sentiment and idea of his own good and happiness. Thus I am of the opinion that the ultimate scientific and practical consequences of the most refined Utilitarianism coincide with the consequences of a properly understood egotism.<sup>1</sup> The fact,

Yours,

<sup>1</sup> The reader is referred to a fine and strong argument by M. L. Carrau against universalistic Hedonism, in the second of two articles devoted to a criticism of Prof. Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics* in the *Revue Philosophique*, March and April, 1878.

then, that I have made the opposition, caused by the unquestionable progress of Utilitarian ethics since Bentham, a subordinate but not original distinction between egotistic Hedonism and universalistic Hedonism may be an ~~object~~ *sub/* for discussion, but it seems to me that it should not be considered so much a positive error of fact as a *confusion* of unquestionable historical data. For the rest, how near those two principles are to each other, and how one is implied in the more or less immediate consequences of the other, is shown by the fact—as Professor Sidgwick himself notes in the first chapter of the fourth book of his *Methods of Ethics*—that although Mr. John S. Mill proposes to make a distinction between them, he does not succeed himself in avoiding the risk of confounding them.<sup>1</sup>

I do not deny that it may be questioned

<sup>1</sup> Apropos of this, Prof. Sidgwick himself, in alluding to my polemic against the Utilitarianism of Mr. Mill, writes: "Nor is his (Barzellotti's) assumption that *il bene dell' individuo* is *mossa inevitabile dell' utilismo* unwarrantable as regards Mill, though it leaves Comte out of sight."....

whether I have sufficiently distinguished historically the two opposed schools—the Ego-tistical and the Utilitarian—and clearly shown their ever-increasing process of *differentiation* since Bentham. That I have well understood, at least, the necessity of distinguishing them will clearly appear to those who may attentively peruse the last four chapters of Part II of this work. At any rate, I willingly acknowledge my gratitude to this eminent critic for having noted in the historical *aperçus* of my book some mistakes in detail which I have hastened to ratify. I must also thank Professor Sidgwick for the kind terms in which he referred to the substance of my work, notwithstanding that he could ~~not~~ but partly approve of it. I may be excused, I presume, if I quote his words: “Our author’s reading in English psychology has been considerable, and the general views and criticisms which he gives us are close and definite, and always instructive, even where they involve misapprehensions. Indeed, he seems to grasp more clearly and completely than most English antagonists the

only

peculiar position of the Associationist psychology; and he describes the distinctions and mutual relations of the different writers with much subtlety and delicacy of apprehension. And for the not unfrequent errors in detail, which I have to notice in this work, there are two kinds of excuse: Firstly, the disposition, at once excellence and defect of English philosophers, to sacrifice systematic coherence to fidelity of reflective observation, makes the historical study of them peculiarly complicated and perplexing; and, secondly, such a historical study is at present in the most rudimentary and imperfect condition among ourselves."

To another criticism of his I think I can also reply. He says that when I affirm that no moral investigation, properly so called, can be based on the doctrines of Comte, it clearly appears that my judgment rests "entirely on *à priori* arguments. *And these arguments have much force; only they really tell against Comte's methodical consistency.* A strictly 'objective' study of mankind as a collection

of organisms placed in certain temporal and spatial relations to each other, mutually dependent for their preservation, but occasionally acting on each other distinctively, affords no basis for any systematic direction of conduct. But Comte's objective psychology does not exclude notions whose content belongs entirely to introspective observation; it only insists on employing them meritized, *just as the unreflective mind furnishes them.* And so his sociology deals throughout with facts not expressible in terms of matter and motion, facts that have indeed an objective aspect, but a very obscure one, and whose significance is entirely subjective: as, *e. g.*, the law of the three stages of belief. Hence Comte's exclusion of empirical psychology does not prevent him from having a characteristic and coherent view of ethics; it only gives his utilitarianism an *unreflective, unanalytical stamp.*"

Now, it seems to me that the cogent reasoning of Prof. Sidgwick does not go so far as to disprove that, in denying the possibility and value of introspective observation, Comte



blocked the only way by which he might have been led to make of Morality, as he understood it, a true science that would regulate human conduct. What confirms me in this opinion is that the author of the *Methods of Ethics* agrees with me in recognizing the profound contradiction between the methodical, presupposed principles of the whole philosophical system of Comte and the conclusions to which he came with respect to disinterested morality, especially in his last works. If there is not *reflection* in the Comtean speculations, which is as much as to say, in this case, the scientific reflection of the mental process by which he reaches certain results, it is enough, it seems to me, to make such results non-scientific. If in the demonstration, which he claims to give, of the moral and social necessity which give us motives of disinterested and mutual love, the *vivre pour autrui*, there are elements and *data* which have for him no rational value, and to which reflection gives no validity, because they proceed from a kind of experience which it does not recognize, it is enough to vitiate throughout and in its *form*

N.B. | the whole demonstration; in such a way, as Galileo said in his *Saggiatore*, that one contingent proposition mixed with others that are necessary is enough to make them all contingent. Incoherence and contradiction pervade the spirit of Positive morality when, from the *fact*, objectively observed, that human individuals *act* upon each other through their social relations, in virtue of certain impulses, Comte passes to the conclusion that they must consequently act so and so in virtue of one moral necessity. It is, nevertheless, the same contradiction in which the Utilitarians, or the followers of inductive morality, fall; a contradiction which, in the case of Comte, is made even more serious through the unconscious, hence illegitimate, use which he makes of psychological observation. "Auguste Comte," says M. Terraz, in one of his notable studies on the Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century (Paris, 1877), "ne reconnaît que des faits; il faudrait qu'il admit des principes absolus et rationnels; or, il n'admet, que des idées relatives et expérimentales. Il peut parler de ce qui est,

non de ce qui doit être ; du réel, non de l'idéal ; chez lui la morale est entraînée dans la même chute que la métaphysique."

While I agreed with the English philosophers that dogmatical presumptions should be excluded from the province of philosophy, I could not, as I cannot now, agree with them as to the limits and results of the way in which they interpret the data of experience. The point of controversy was, therefore, on the *methodical legitimacy* of reducing, as they do, the elementary data of moral facts to one or more of the laws that are established by scientific observation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Apropos of my criticism on Mill's *reduction*, Professor Sidgwick says : "He (Barzellotti) notices Mill's confusion of rational and emotional elements in moral action, or, more particularly, of the dutiful and sympathetic impulses which have a phenomenal distinctness undeniable on any system. And he argues effectively against the contemptuous treatment of the question of the objectivity of moral rules as belonging to transcendental metaphysics, and practically indifferent; whereas it is a fact of inner experience that on the belief in such objectivity depends the force of moral impulse to obey them, in so far as strictly moral."

I cannot, for want of space, add any more than that I have not made any substantial changes in the American edition because I still hold the same views, and also because I am not aware that the views which I then criticised have since undergone any substantial modifications. For the rest, I hope that my work will not seem altogether inopportune in America, where it is, no doubt, realized that the vital questions of philosophy must be discussed on broad grounds and with impartiality, that the ideal of free institutions and the conditions most favorable to true human happiness may be permanently realized. My sincere desire of contributing somewhat to the promotion of philosophical studies, even outside of my own circle, is the chief motive which has prompted me to authorize this translation, the execution of which is due mainly to the interest kindly taken in my work by Miss Ida Lilian Olcott, to whom I feel very much indebted.

GIACOMO BARZELLOTTI.

FLORENCE, May 10, 1878.

# ETHICS OF POSITIVISM.

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## PART I.

### LIBERTY AND CONSCIENCE.

#### I.

IN times of great renovations it often happens that the inevitable consequences of certain states of mind and principles appear unexpectedly, although they were before ignored or misapprehended. As the subterraneous fire, making its way in every direction through the mountain-side, surprises the villages, which, being farthest from the summit, have perhaps not seen the burning lava for centuries, so the potent work of opinions and principles which

prepare civil changes manifests itself in very different ways in the various orders of thought and life.

The speculative tendency of modern philosophical thought appears also in science, and the great problems of existence and understanding, which were declared insoluble by the Scotch, and afterward derided by Skepticism, are revived under another form in the Positive school, the doctrines of which present lately a very singular spectacle. Ignored by most scientists before the age of Auguste Comte, these doctrines withstood the fervor of the French and German speculations which succeeded to Sensualism, and found in later times a more favorable condition for their propagation in the universal mental restlessness and weariness which so many systems resulting from criticism had brought about. Then, they who would not know of metaphysics, or, rather, of philosophy, and who sought, as it is now expressed, a sound knowledge of things without losing themselves in abstractions, assumed the name of Positivists. Retaining few and

uncommon principles of formal logic, and taking the method of natural science as the standard-method by which any inquiry should be carried on, this new school of thinkers omitted from their range of investigation any subject in the treatment of which something more than scientific instruments was to be used. There were then, as there are now, many who call themselves Positivists on the simple ground that they regard experimental research as implying the use, more or less accurate, of instruments and of the senses, and accept science as nothing more than an accumulation of facts. Fortunately, men of such bent of mind do not exclusively constitute the Positive school of the present. The method suggested in the first, and exaggerated in the second, of the two principal works of Auguste Comte, has ever been the guiding principle in the development of Positivism. The doctrines of this school are now expounded by many able writers, generally with acumen and minuteness of analysis, so that we see the speculations of their master gradually assume

the character of an intrinsically scientific theory. Although the scientific spirit which pervades this school was one of its original characteristics, it is only of late that its effects have become manifest. In France, Littré and Taine have given more breadth to the doctrines of their teacher; and in England, Mill, Bain, Spencer, Lewes and Buckle have added psychology to the new system of philosophy, a branch of science which Comte had excluded from it. They thus rescued it from the materialism of physiologists, putting in a partially independent form logic, morality, and the philosophy of history. The title of Positivist constantly lost some of its vulgar and anti-scientific character, and gradually there grew around, and ultimately within, the school itself, an atmosphere of speculation. The problems of the understanding, of perception, of God and of Good, which had been so zealously banished from the premises of the Positive method, had to be met finally as logical consequences of those very premises; and in this way a certain mental condition of the times, alluded to before,



became verified in Positivism. The eternal dialogue between conscience and being began anew in the mind of Hamlet.

An occasion that would proceed from the very force of events and opinions was necessary, as usual, for this new philosophical tendency to come to light. Auguste Comte's doctrine, as enunciated in his first work, was directed principally to the basis and to the laws of scientific method, and opposed especially the dogmatism of previous systems, by advocating the method of experience, and the careful investigation of facts. Such doctrine seemed, therefore, to many, to imply a formula easily applicable to any scientific faith.

The matter changed aspect when Positivism, self-confident and sure of the favor of the times, undertook to affirm all of its principles and deduce their consequences. At this point, the question, which so far had been one of method and within the limits of history, became suddenly a question of morality, politics and economy. Consistently with their premises, those who professed the principle of

experience repudiated the theory of free-will and the imputableness of actions; they made the principle of utility the standard of morality, in lieu of Law and Duty; they changed the foundations of Right and Authority, and now promise to substitute other institutions for those that have hitherto governed our political and social relations, and would, besides, give us a new religion in place of Christianity.

In France, Germany, and Italy, the public press daily discuss these subjects, and numerous works on questions raised by the new philosophers are published; but in England, and in America, the practical and social sense of the Anglo-Saxons has been more strongly aroused by the new doctrines, so that in those countries, where the Positivists may be more numerous than elsewhere, and are well supported in their opinions by able literary and scientific reviews, there are many contradictions of the new views, and not one number of these periodicals appears without containing extensive discussions on the most important

ethical and political questions from opposite points of view. English Positivism is therefore the school in which the rational and scientific direction of the Positive mind is more clearly and vigorously defined. Germany, tired of affirming, is now waiting; but the publications of the history of the various schools, as well as the occasional appearance of some large work on philosophical topics, prove that the speculative work of the mind does not cease in that traditional land of metaphysics.

On the decline of the speculative movement in Italy, where it had begun with Galluppi, in the first half of this century, and with the rise of Criticism and the Hegelian doctrines, an echo of Positivism propagated very rapidly under the influence which the study of foreign speculations had on the Italian mind. The unbroken tradition of the experimental method in the Italian schools, and the speculative moderation with which the new doctrines were enunciated, contributed

also to that propagation.<sup>1</sup> The second work of Auguste Comte is certainly very little known in Italy; the second part of his first, implying the principle most agreeable with the positive tendencies of the age, is very much more expounded and accepted as a guide by many.

Positivism is known in Italy more in its general principles than it is in its essential development, and is professed by many more as a method of research than as a doctrine; it is an opinion which has not as yet attained to such a degree of development as to constitute a school. A few writers, such as Angiulli and Tocco, have considered the Positive doctrines in their affinity with ancient and modern philosophical tradition; but, with the exception of Gabelli, about whom we shall have occasion to speak in the second part, we are not aware that any one has examined the principles and the moral consequences of the doctrines of Positivism. It seems, there-

<sup>1</sup> The above referred to moderation is noticeable in the *Saggio sul Positivismo*, by Prof. Villari.

more, quite useful to undertake an examination of the important part which Positivism has assumed in ethics in so far as it refers to the two conceptions of Liberty and Happiness. We shall thus endeavor to refer the conclusions of that school both to the principles of the method on which its doctrines proceed and to the general movement of modern philosophical thought.

## II.

JOHN STUART MILL justly remarks, in his book on Comte and Positivism, that the general tendency of the doctrines of the great French philosopher is due less to Comte himself than to the spirit of the times. The method of experience, from the numerous results of which naturalists for more than two centuries continued to draw inferences, had its application extended in the psychological investigations of Descartes and his school, and in later times in those of the Scotch and of Locke; but it became definitively entitled to scientific validity in Kant's immortal work, *The Critique of Pure*

No. *Reason.* The Positive school accepted that method, giving the broadest meaning to the word *experience*, a meaning which seems to be the major term in the new doctrines, while it constitutes their most flattering and popular, but least scientific, feature.

To the idea of experience was added another, no less dear to modern thinkers and familiar to the soul—the idea of Law. The Positivists properly adopted this idea as a second postulate of their method; for, any research the result of which is to be accepted as a foundation in science must culminate in *something* constant and immutable which the human mind fixes in the complicated variations of facts, and conceives as a natural necessity inherent in the forces of the universe. But, the scope of the idea of Law became notably narrower in the application made by the new philosophers. While naturalists, whom they respected greatly, applied mathematics to the study of terrestrial and celestial phenomena, and reasoned ingeniously concerning causes and forces, the word Law sounded to the multi-

tude as something alive and extremely active; whereas, in the new doctrines, by Law was only meant a certain intrinsic necessity of succession observed in facts, a necessity which has now become the pivot of the theory of the will, and the doctrine in which it is more resolutely affirmed has assumed the name of *Determinism*. It may be well to briefly examine the origin of this idea.

\* Cf. p. 40, where the note below is confirmed

When with the eye of consciousness I observe a world of facts in myself and observe myself in the universe, what appears most evident is the continuity of those facts. Going back from the present moment, when the motion of my hand in writing, in obedience to my will, follows an order of thoughts, facts and studies, intellectual and organic conditions, and, gradually receding in the consciousness of my past life, I can review the uninterrupted series of what constitutes my life, past and present, I can thus re-examine the whole of myself, and of the links of that series, I shall certainly not find one to which a part, an atom of power and causality, has not been

\* Not so much as this — merely the actual succession or sequence itself. Channing & Wright throws out all but the sequence; so much every strict Positivist. Cf. p. 40

transmitted from what has preceded. Nothing is more mysterious, and at the same time more evident in facts, than the origin of such close relations. As in the physical world, since Newton, it is proved that the quantity of force does not vary in the continuous transformations of matter, so in the spiritual world force is persistent. Influences of any nature have more or less permanent effects on inward life; a sentiment, a thought, circumstances, even the slightest incident, all add to what we are, and modify and transform us. Thus, after allowing, in a certain measure, for originality of character, we may ascertain, more or less, the sum of the conditions which influence mental development. The constant relationship of psychological and physiological elements which we observe in individual life has its analogy in the social organism; for, in proceeding from the singular to the collective, we see that uniformity and similarity increase in proportion as the facts become general, just as the undulations of the landscape appear to be level to one looking far out on the



horizon. Thus, all life, whether spiritual or material, consists of facts in the order of sequence which the philosophers of history, from Macchiavelli and Montesquieu to Vico and Buckle, have investigated so as to reduce social phenomena to laws variously determined in time and space.

It is clear, however, that while the historian and the philosopher proceed on such mode of observation, their conclusions should not be accepted as intrinsically scientific generalizations. The surveyor who, by means of the compass and level, measures the surface of a mountain or of a valley cannot speak of either as can the geologist who, studying their history, as it were, in the pages of their strata, traces their metamorphoses from the remotest age. Scientific knowledge of physical and psychological facts implies a clear and certain perception of the causal relations involved in the sequence of those facts, and from such cognition alone can the law by which facts are produced and transformed be deduced. But it is important to engage with care in the process

of induction, as nothing is easier in science than to exceed its proper limits, and end with a mere hypothesis. And such is generally the case when, identifying ourselves with things distinct from us, we fancy in the inner efficacy of the will the same fatal necessity inherent in the phenomena of the sensible universe; in which case, both the uniform continuity of extrinsic things and facts, and the equally uniform continuity of the facts of the mind, appear almost as one pre-established, inevitable and fatal series from which we cannot be separated. The phenomena of the will and of consciousness are then no longer perceived as involving essentially different forces, but only as the necessary effects of numerous active principles implied in the environment of the individual. Thus the doctrine of fate, originating in an erroneous generalization of the principle of cause, tends to deny that principle in man; but, against such a negation, there is heard an inward voice which distinguishes man from the fatal forces of the universe, declaring him at the same time responsible for his acts. It is true that in case

of fault many would persuade themselves of the contrary; but the criminal knows how the logic of remorse confirms *right* and *wrong*, even if some modern theorists still imagine such a discrimination to be an eternal illusion of the human mind.

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## III.

THE Positivists thus took an intermediate view in the question of Liberty. They assumed a standpoint between those who, confounding the efficacy of the will with the uniform operations of other forces, conceive the fatal laws governing those forces to underlie also voluntary and conscious activity; and those who, losing sight of the relations of psychological facts, do not recognize any law to which those facts may conform. The former doctrine leads to Destiny and Pantheism; the latter to Indifference and Chance. The Positivists tended to this standpoint from the start. They denied fatalism, and, in observing the constant order of succession, according to which psychological phenomena occur, they considered but

N.B.

one phase of the long series of antecedents and consequents. In that particular aspect they conceived the implication of such a law of necessity as is observed to determine the phenomena of external nature. The word *necessity*, however, acquired a new meaning in the new doctrine; for, to know a law no longer meant in the Positive school the cognition of the operations of a force, but simply a recognition of the regular succession of certain phenomena. The law by which facts become sequential was not conceived as a principle of essential connection between the facts of a sequence, but only as the invariable coördination of those facts in time and space.

The principle of cause and the conception of force, such as Liebnitz adopted so successfully in his *Monadology*, were rejected by Hume and by the Sensualists; and the Positivists, following them on that score, indulged in such investigations of human acts as implied simply the study of analogies between individual and social existence. Psychology was thus based, to a large extent, on a few

cf. p. 35  
correct.

abstract principles of method; and, considering the superficial character of psychological facts, the new philosophers went no farther than the observation of the constant and uniform succession of those facts. In reality, their observations implied the quantitative laws of the facts which they undertook to explain; and it is hardly necessary to say here that such method, useful as it may be to attain to some truly important results in physical science, will ever be inadequate to explain one single fact of the mind. We will briefly refer to the grounds upon which Positive thinkers urge the application of their experimental method to the theory of the will which they claim to reconcile in part with the idea of personality and responsibility.

Alexander Bain treats the subject very comprehensively in his work on *Mental and Ethical Science*. Beginning with the primitive elements of voluntary action, he proceeds to analyze separately all its elements in their relations to the physical and psychological conditions of the development of voluntary power. He

recognizes the uniformity of sequence in the mental world as it is admitted to prevail in the physical world, and either affirms or implies that "the same motive, in the same circumstances, will be followed by the same action."

"If it be true," he says, "that by the side of all mental phenomena there runs a line of physical causation, the interruption of the mental sequences would imply irregularity in the physical. The two worlds must stand or fall together." He admits that "the specialty of voluntary action, as compared with the powers of the inanimate world, is that the antecedent and the consequent are conscious mental states"; but this circumstance, important as it is, does not, in his opinion, change the nature of the relations uniting those states. Liberty, that is, initiative liberty, and spontaneity, or absence of compulsion, are, he contends, synonymous terms; and although he affirms that his theory does not reduce mental sequences to pure material laws, the method pursued by him is such as to cause him to explain all mental states

by a theory implying a combination and a conflict of forces.

In referring to motives or ends, he says: "From the nature or definition of Will, pure and proper, the Motive or Ends of action are our Pleasures and Pains." Money, Health, Knowledge, etc., are in his definition intermediate ends, and regards also virtue as one of them, in so far as virtue is the means to common happiness and utility. The various phases of moral development, from the earliest animal appetites, in which the will unfolds from instinct, to the free choice of the adult, are, for Bain, the results of an almost mechanical process. He explains Choice, Deliberation, Self-Determination, Moral Agency and Responsibility by the doctrine of the uniform sequence of motive and action. Of the ends in view, that which we pursue is presumed to have, directly or indirectly, the greatest attraction of any, and this is what determines choice. When we hesitate to pursue any of the ends in view, our suspense is prompted

N.B. (by the recollection of the pains that have resulted to us from hasty action; while in a state of suspense we weigh the motives, *of course*, with reference to the happiness or unhappiness which the pursuit of one of the motives then before our mind may ultimately bring us. This state of the mind is what we mean by deliberation, in Bain's opinion. By self-determination he means the pursuit of motives without any interference from without. "*Self*" he says, "in the matter of action, is only the sum of the feelings, pleasurable and painful, actual and ideal, that impel the conduct, together with the various activities impelled." We then see that this great philosopher substitutes the necessity of motives, as almost the effects of self-acting forces, for the immediate and determining efficacy of mental autonomy. According to his doctrine, human character, *Self*, is the effect of internal activities and external influences mysteriously combined and transformed almost like undercurrents or molecules in the



slow process of material transformations.<sup>1</sup> We can now understand how the meaning of *morality* has been substantially changed by the new school. In the conscience of man the terms good, evil, virtue and the like have a value derived, on one hand, from the conception of moral law ; and on the other, from the idea of free human agency. In denying this value, we do away with the idea of *personality*, and we do not in consequence recognize personal responsibility before the law, even before the law as it is conceived by the Positivists ; nor can the sanction of their morality be conceived other than as a force quantitatively opposed to the motives of the agent. The penalty inflicted for any transgression, interpreted in accordance with the moral teachings of the school in question, appears almost like an obstacle raised by society and civil law against what is a necessary link in the sequence of the motives of man ; and penalty, thus interpreted, does not

<sup>1</sup> *Mental and Moral Science ; a Compendium of Psychology and Ethics.* By Alexander Bain.

carry with it the force of moral sanction in the significance which mankind have hitherto given to the phrase, *moral sanction*. If we accept the Positive explanation of morality, we cannot consistently try or punish one whose guilt is only the unavoidable consequence of a violent motive proving stronger than his fear of the law. To make him responsible for an action the motive of which is the inevitable and universal necessity of nature would be as ridiculous and absurd as to claim redress from a river which overflows with disastrous effects to the surrounding country.

We do not mean to say that all the Positivists accept unhesitatingly the consequences of such moral doctrines. The English Positivists in particular do not. The history of their nation is splendid proof of their truly practical and positive sense; a sense which makes them tolerant of free discussion and inquiry, without assenting to the results of crude and imperfect investigations of the highly involved question of right and wrong. While in Germany and in France, philosophers like

Büchner, Littré, Vulpian and Thuys do not hesitate to subject the facts of the mind to physiological laws, in England the positive sense of the people is such as to prevent them from jumping at conclusions in the discussion of a question upon which philosophical schools are still divided. The cautious treatment by the English of a question which has for centuries perplexed the mind and conscience of man is due in part to their characteristic civil sentiment. In that country, more than elsewhere, the individual is identified with the institutions, loves them as his own, defends their cause in religion, science and morals. It is not surprising, therefore, that the English should proceed more slowly than some other nations in the demolition of the old moral principles on which possibly depends the present and future welfare of their national existence.

## IV.

THIS moderation is more noticeable in John S. Mill than in any other English philosopher. He accepted the principles of Posi-

tivism, making some reservations, however, which suggest the peculiar, and, in some respects, original, direction of his mind; a direction to which may also be attributed the influence which he has exercised on some philosophers of Great Britain.

In giving full assent to the experimental method, Mill did not fail to do away with the presuppositions which Comte had derived from the Sensualists and the Phrenologists. He did not exclude from the range of his method inner experience, the results of logical inquiry, or any problem the solution of which cannot be reached by any other method than the method of natural science. Mill thus took an intermediate position between the extremists of his school; and, while he pursued the careful method initiated by the Scotch, and avoided the conclusions of the forced logic of any particular system, he gave a powerful impulse to psychological inquiry; so that he could say with reason that his island had regained the scepter of psychology. His

*Logic* clearly shows that no one is more of a Positivist than he, in so far as the term applies to one who disapproves of the results of mere metaphysical speculation. His theory of judgment and reasoning, and his conclusions as to what are the highest principles, lead in fact to pure Nominalism; and in what he has written on method and induction he repudiates, as is usual for those of the Positive school, the idea of efficient causes. He is, however, much more moderate in discussing the question of free-will. This we see from his implied recognition of the idea of imputation and certain autonomy of character, notwithstanding his belief in the necessity and uniformity of psychological facts. Mill's opinion of the nature of voluntary actions, and of their dependence on the law of universal causation, is indicated in the following quotation from his *System of Logic*: "To my apprehension, a volition is not an efficient, but simply a physical, cause. Our will causes our bodily actions in the same sense, and in no other, in which cold causes

ice, or a spark causes an explosion of gunpowder. The volition, a state of our mind, is the antecedent; the motion of our limbs in conformity to the volition is the consequent. This sequence I conceive to be not a subject of direct consciousness in the sense intended by the theory. The antecedent, indeed, and consequent, are subjects of consciousness. But the connection between them is a subject of experience."

Proceeding on this principle, Mill excludes from the mental world a state of consciousness implying the apprehension of the internal cause of our actions, which he considers as an order of sequence, but not as essentially connected antecedents and consequents. Such view of mental phenomena is identical to a view of the phenomena of nature in which force is concealed. Sir William Hamilton, who could not, by a rational method, avoid the opposite doctrines of Fate and Chance, accepted the immediate and mediate testimony of consciousness in favor of the doctrine of free-will. But, in an elaborate examination of

his philosophy, Mill contends that the feeling by which man fully determines his choice between opposed and conflicting motives can be referred to past experience, and is therefore insufficient to prove free-will.

This skilful application of the purely experimental method causes us to advert to a theory prominent in the works of most Positive writers. They either affirm or imply that, knowing the character and disposition of a person, and the motives before his mind, his conduct can be foreseen with the same precision that we foresee natural phenomena. Such reasoning is hypothetical in itself, and is evidently based on the presupposition that if self-observation, like the observation of the facts of the outer world, implies simply the experience of the voluntary act in so far as it is an accomplished fact instead of implying the origination of the voluntary act in the causal efficacy of mind, it follows that we can predict phenomena on one condition alone—a condition which we would find in the perfect analogy, which is yet to be verified, between

the progressive succession of the facts of the mind and the regular recurrence of the facts of external nature. But, while the effects of the invariable laws of nature can be, and are, to a certain extent, foreseen by a computation of the quantity and intensity of force, we do not believe that a similar calculation can be made in our endeavors to establish the laws of mind. Notwithstanding Bain's doctrine, it is observed that the same circumstances, the same ends in moral life, do not always produce the same actions. Moreover, the presupposition that the relation between certain motives and individual character is known before the course of conduct prompted by those motives, combined with some points of character, is manifested is one of the very presuppositions which, according to the Positivists themselves, we should not accept while the above referred to analogy is not demonstrated on strictly scientific grounds. What observation easily presupposes is the causal mental efficacy by which we create and translate motives into actions.

That Mill must reject any predictions based



on the law of necessity in the phenomena of mind is clear, when we consider that the conception of a necessary sequence, such as he holds to be that of human phenomena, has a small basis at best, and that his conclusions have but the relative value derived from past experience, which, however, teaches that it is possible that actions should occur quite contrary to those contemplated or expected. This point is particularly noticeable in John S. Mill, and upon it he dwells, taking occasion for absolutely denying any intervention of fate in determining mental phenomena, regretting at the same time that this fatalistic idea should have been so often confounded with philosophical Determinism. At this point he openly departs from the conclusions of the extremists of his school. Bain admits the possibility in man of changing his character by force of some motive before his mind, whereas Mill seldom refers to motives, and simply concedes that a person has the power of changing his character if he will. Such a doctrine he regards as clearly distinct from the views of

the fatalist who, in holding human actions to be dependent either on a combination of external conditions, or on essential, and consequently inevitable, propensities of human nature, does not really regard man as being responsible for his conduct.

This ingenious theory does not, however, bear the test of logic. Either Mill considers that power by which man can modify or control himself as the effect of a causal concatenation, in which case, as Mansel justly remarks, fatalism is implied, or he introduces in his reasoning a postulate which experience, as he understands it, does not furnish. Such a postulate would be a first antecedent, not resulting, by necessary succession, from more remote antecedents in the mental sequence, and would be equivalent to a primal link in the causal series which begins in our consciousness of free-will.

The points we have considered in the doctrine of Mill imply a speculative tendency which may be regarded as an indirect proof of that philosopher's strong moral sense, the

power of which may account for another contradiction which we are about to point out in his discussion of the subject. He accepts as a positive postulate a certain distinction between good and evil, and considering evil as that which is naturally avoided, hence as an object of pain, he endeavors to explain on the basis of that distinction the reason why mankind should regard some ends as useful and just in themselves. He recognizes, therefore, the sense of personal responsibility as a fact resulting from the recognition, by the individual and society, that justice should be administered in contemplation of a purpose which by ultimate analysis may prove to be either *self-defense* or *sympathy*. Where Bain recognizes a *petitio principii*, Mill is evidently inconsistent; for, the real difference between good and evil, right and wrong, which Mill postulates, and refers to a sense of individual responsibility, is related by final analysis to our consciousness of the freedom of the will and of moral law.

## V.

THE reader may fail to see any real philosophical originality in the Positive doctrines concerning the Will as they have, so far, been exposed in this work. In fact, the first principles of a philosophy which does not recognize efficient causes—a denial which characterizes throughout the doctrines in question—are found in Hume's *Treatise of Human Reason*, and also in the theories of the French and English Sensualists; while the habit which Mill and Bain have of using the term *experience* in a rather confused sense, giving it sometimes a strictly scientific meaning, is traceable as far back as Bacon, Locke, and the oldest inductive and empirical schools. But, in order to explain fully the theoretical development that has taken place in the Positive school of late years, it is requisite to set forth how those constituting that school, assuming in common with Comte a general question of method as their starting-point, have been gradually led to the study of essentially psychological sub-

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jects. The tendency which Positivists in general, and particularly the English, have commonly shown in their ways of treating questions of mental philosophy is such as to make them appear to be engaged in an intermediate path between the extremes of absolutely denying the old doctrines and of affirming too much from their own point of view; so that their only claim to speculative novelty seems to be the peculiar attitude which they have assumed in the controversy on the great question of mind. Their theories represent, in an historical sense, the shelter in which thinkers of the present age seek mental rest from doubts with which they have long been distressed. A skeptical expedient which, although professedly recurred to as *positive*, must be repellant to the truly scientific mind, even if it may not be absolutely useless to those who, realizing the need of philosophical certainty, conveniently create a system of their own.

The tendency to which we have just referred is evident when we consider the distinction that the Positivists have sought to make

between Determinism and the other idea of fate as it existed in the systems of old. Whether the older philosophers, basing their speculations on the subject, held in the phenomena of objective life an active force identical with the conscious efficiency of the will, or conceived voluntary actions to be in submission to the law of necessity which regulates bodily forces, it is known that in either case they required a metaphysical postulate for the solution of psychological questions, and such a postulate implied generally the causal efficiency of mind. Neither the doctrine of fate, such as is logically deduced from the hypothesis of a universal soul as held by the Stoics, nor the doctrine of the strict materialists of the last century, would therefore be in accord with the canons of a school which accepted only carefully observed facts, adopted no other method but that of experience, and used as a logical mode of observation the process of gradual induction by which the laws governing facts are established. Such facts, however, as we have seen, when carefully and properly inves-

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tigated, are simply constant and uniform appearances of matter. The so-called Positive age, the third in the celebrated order of succession conceived by Comte, finds its origin in the substitution of a purely scientific knowledge of phenomena and of their laws, for the abstract metaphysical entities which, in a preceding stage of mental development, are, according to him, conceived in place of those laws. It is well to note here that among those entities which the great French thinker repudiates there is certainly the notion of causality.

But, it has long been an open question or philosophy whether in the contemplation of the phases of natural phenomena man perceives simply a reflection of his conception, or whether in his consciousness alone lies the immediate basis of that conception. It seems, therefore, that, in repudiating the ideas of causality and efficiency, the Positivists have from the first laid aside considerations which may be essential to the proper and direct investigation of the facts of the mind. On the other hand,

to suppose that they have seems hasty when we consider a certain tendency which they show in their method of dealing with the question. In the works of Mill and Bain, reference is continually made to phenomena which they attribute to consciousness, and some of these phenomena, as we have already noted, imply elements of voluntary action. Moreover, Mill very ably contradicts Comte, who denies psychological examination proper, and in his *Logic* he goes so far as to constitute the phenomena of consciousness into an order distinct from the phenomena of organism and matter. It seems hardly possible that after such affirmations these philosophers should so pursue their arguments as to fall into such manifest self-contradictions. But, their very inconsistencies, and the importance which they constantly attach to psychology, are gratifying indications that even the new school find in psychological analysis a source of information different from the light which scientific experiment alone can ever throw on the involved question of mind.



It is, nevertheless, undeniable that the true method of psychological inquiry is not yet clearly defined in the Positive mind. Experience, observation, induction, and like terms, have now so broad a meaning that they may equally be used to denote schools of different and even opposite scientific tendencies. It seems as if, now-a-days, a school need only assume the name of Positive, Experimental or Inductive, in order to find adherents even among those whose opinions may be essentially different from those of the school to which such a title is given. Unfortunately, very few consider anything more than the mere implication of a title; and, unlike the supporters of true science, many fail to investigate whereto the course of Positive thought leads, and fail likewise to ascertain what is the highest criterion by which Positivists claim acceptance for their views. We may add that careless definition and the indifference, if not contempt, with which questions of mind are generally treated, have had the effect of confounding, in the minds of many, the school of Positive psy-

chologists with the school of ethnologists, anthropologists and historians, the results of whose researches are generally of the same nature as those of the Positivists, without, however, following substantially the principles or the method of the Positive school. In fact, these schools consider man under different aspects. While they both make intellectual and moral life the object of their studies, the former, pursuing their investigations without departing from the method of the naturalists, observe the facts of inward life simply in the external manifestations of the soul, in various organisms and races, in the customs and in the history of nations; the latter, on the contrary, investigate the same facts in so far as they are accessible to self-observation. Both the naturalists and the ethnographers, like Quatrefages, regard the facts of the inner world as essentially different from those of external nature. They observe those facts as they are presented in statistics, travels, experiments and chronicles. The Positive psychologist considers the facts of the mental world as facts of consciousness, and

observes them both subjectively and objectively.<sup>1</sup>

What is important to note for our purpose is that the Positive observation of the facts of the mind is not based on the state of consciousness involving the apprehension of the psychological fact as an act of the mind in the very instant it is produced. The succession of experiences which they conceive in place of true consciousness seems to imply simply a recognition of the act as an effect, and not the apprehension of the force that causes it. While they miss the inner force which impels the agent into activity, they perceive the act only as a modification of previous mental impressions. The true psychologist detects in consciousness an inherent capacity of apprehending what actually passes in *self*; whereas, by his experimental mode of observation, the Positivist sees in consciousness simply a record, as it were, of the feelings which have success-

<sup>1</sup>The above somewhat inaccurate distinction between the two schools is given by Vacherot, in his late work, *Les Sciences et les Consciences*, Paris, 1870.

ively been impressed on the mind. To the observation of both, mind manifests itself through the phenomena of the inner world; but one considers the active forces which underlie mental functions, while the other studies the effects of mental forces alone through the faithful but cold language of the past. The harmony of mental powers is the common object of their observations, but the former seizes a spontaneous force in the mental act almost like the physiologist who, watching the dying animal, seizes the flash of vital force which causes its last pulsation. The latter, on the contrary, sees the acts through memory, no longer as the expressions of active forces, but only as objects of analysis, almost like cold and motionless remains under the knife of the anatomist.

It is easy to see how such a method is partly due to the particular conception which the Positivists formed of consciousness as they assumed the premises of Comte and Hume. It is known that, with a strong faith in phrenology, Comte disavowed all belief in subjective psychology, declaring that the mind cannot re-

act on its own spontaneous operations ; an assertion not only absurd in itself as being contrary to the most undeniable fact that we are conscious of our past actions, but also as involving the scientifically erroneous presupposition that we have no immediate knowledge of our actual mental states. The English Positivists appear to have become possessed with this presupposition, but they have not accepted so extreme a conclusion as Comte reached as to self-knowledge. But the influence of the negative philosophies of Hume and Kant was still felt when the modified doctrines of the new philosophers were first enunciated. The old ideas of efficient causes could not, therefore, regain their former objective value founded on consciousness, in an age of comparative philosophical indifference ; nor could the English thinkers soon become insensible to the splendid tradition of the method of psychological investigation which the Scotch had formerly taught to Europe and to the world. Thus failing to make the immediate cause of mental phenomena the object of their inquiries, philosophers

A.B. like Bain and Mill have given to psychology a character which they have themselves explained as a *natural history of the mind*. They observe the facts of the mind arranged in an uninterrupted series, almost like images reflected in a mirror, and do not think of the power by virtue of which those facts become sequential; nor do they apprehend the essential connection between the mental sequence and a spontaneous force of the mind. Psychologists of this category see mental facts gathered in memory like objects drifting calmly and continuously on the surface of a river, but do not point to the source of activity from which they proceed. This insufficiency of their method is again perceived when we see them define mind as the unknown recipient of mental phenomena.

A.B. It is now noticeable how they reduce psychological law to a law of association, to a coördination of ideas in time and space, and as they reduce to a single fact of that law the principles of causality and of force,

so do they refer to the same law the external perception and the instincts of animals, as Charles Darwin has lately expounded. Judgment, reason, induction, science, are all regarded, under the new system, as associations of facts and of their concomitants; combinations of elements of experience which the thinkers in question express by an abstract term in an identical proposition—universal ideas and supreme principles. They also explain the idea of the infinite by the law of association, declaring that such idea is formed by adding new points to many others which we have previously thought out in time and space. In this way, an insignificant and obscure fact of the mind is transformed, in the doctrines under consideration, into all the facts of the mind; very much in the same way that Condillac transformed sensation into the most splendid conception, into judgment or reasoning, and into the most solemn of moral phenomena.

## VI.

It is easy to gather from the foregoing remarks the conclusions of the new psychologists in regard to the will. The theory of both Mill and Bain, which we have just considered, may be considered as resulting from the particular stand-point which they have taken in psychology. They occupy an intermediate position between those who acknowledge the immediate testimony of consciousness without considering the elements that enter into self-knowledge, and those who see in self-knowledge simply a fact of external experience the law of which we derive from a study of historical facts, or from the cognition of the general laws of the phenomena of the outer world. We now propose to briefly refer to the results of the new mode in which Positive philosophers follow the inquiry of choice and free-will.

They do not deny, as we have seen, that we are conscious of successive and connected states of mind; at least they do not in instances



where action is not regarded as the result of spontaneity; in which cases, as the poet would express it, *Amore è a noi di fuori offerto*, we are actuated by the force of instinct, so that action implies no element of determination, but is only an automatic operation of the mind; something like the unconscious bending of a plant growing where but a dim ray of light penetrates. The various phases of our existence, from the most important events to the mere incidental facts, from the serious consequences of old habits to the first impulses of free-will, from which habits spring as from a germ, all exist in our consciousness as a sequence, as a uniform and invariable order of antecedents and consequents, of causes and effects. The character which Manzoni describes in his *Promessi Sposi* as the Unknown, in reviewing the course of his life, sees himself carried along from bad to worse deeds, and feels so oppressed under the burden of a certain logical necessity of his acts that he is about to free himself from it through death. He tries to understand how, free from a sense of

hatred or fear, he has been prompted to cause so much suffering, so much misery, to an unknown and unfortunate woman, only to satisfy the evil inclinations of a friend. He wonders *why* he feels the impulse that has led him to so much iniquity to be an instantaneous motion of the mind, caused by habitual feelings, a necessary consequence of a thousand antecedent facts, rather than the effect of deliberation. This tremendous necessity implied in his course of conduct does not, however, awake in him a sense of self-justification. So far from diminishing his sense of responsibility, it seems to increase it as he realizes the terrible consequences of one single initiating motion of free-will.

It is true that, considered in a certain aspect, the consciousness of individual life implies the same sequential necessity which we observe in the course of history. If it were possible, however, to apprehend the beginning and the most obscure circumstances of what sometimes appears to be a social catastrophe, we would discover its real and primal cause in some one of

the elements which concur to produce it. But we cannot see more than an order of succession, a long and invariable series of facts; and although we observe how those facts coalesce, so as to constitute a complete succession, we do not ascertain, but simply conjecture, which of those facts has the strongest and most direct influence on the others. Thus viewed through the mist of long years, an event which was brought about by the combination of innumerable desires and passions appears to us as the result of a mechanical combination of congenial or antagonistic forces, almost like a phenomenon of the inanimate world; and measuring, to a certain degree, the quantity and nature of those forces, we deduce an historical law. But, if we could identify ourselves with that event, and for an instant be conscious of the many psychological conditions which concurred to its occurrence, we would be conscious of a multiplicity of necessary causes, while we would not fail to realize the movement of the will which initiated the train of feelings and passions which resulted ultimately in the social disturbances, and we

would thus find that on the will of the few often depend the destinies of a nation.

What the historian and the chronicler does not see, that which the observation of the succession of internal facts does not reveal, we know by the actual and instantaneous consciousness of our will. In the various phases of a mental state, from the beginning of a motive which prompts a resolution to the end of the act resulting therefrom, there are intervals in which the soul feels alternately the power of passion and of reason, of necessity and of volition; it is like the painful alternation of desire and indifference, a powerless submission and a powerful control; a conscious change of thought from duty to pleasure, from good to evil; a struggle between the fear of one's own resolution and a reckless confidence in it. In all this there is, no doubt, *necessity*, there is *law*; but the point in question is not whether this mental strife is the effect of law or not. The point at issue is whether the individual contributes to the establishment of the law of necessity which it is contended determines men-

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tal facts. We ask whether the individual puts himself under the influence of that law through his own mental power. The question really is whether what the fatalist and determinist call, vaguely, *motives of action* are such for the individual in so far as he makes and wishes them to be. The point upon which we take issue with the Positivists is not the law of voluntary causality and its prevalence or alternations in the various aspects of mental existence. The consciousness of motive is not absolute, it does not exist previously to the action resulting from the motive; if such was not the case, the influence of the motive in the various mental states which follow it would always be the same, whereas we know that the influence of the motive becomes weaker as the acts and their consequences increase and the will relatively loses its force.

The original source of every human phenomenon, therefore, is to be found in the immediate intervention of the mind, in free determination. Such is the first link of the causal chain. But mental intervention is a

transient force which expends itself as soon as its effect is produced, as soon as the act is initiated; and it is only in so far as we are actually conscious of that force that it may have any scientific value in the theory of experience. The observation through the memory of the succession of mental facts reveals the various stages of mental life, but it does not detect the ~~nessus~~ which causes those stages to become sequential. In fact, it is only after we observe a mental state as an accomplished fact, that the voluntary antecedents which gave birth to it appear invariably connected with the consequents; and not until the sequence is formed do the links, which have been freely chosen, acquire a character of inseparability.

From what has been said we can more easily comprehend the real meaning of the passage we have before quoted from the writings of J. S. Mill. Consistently with the method of observing successively the facts of the mind, he denies that the causal bond of the various elements of the voluntary act can be considered as an object of consciousness. Such *nessus*, we

apprehend, in fact, in the immediate consciousness of the antecedent and its consequent, of the motive and of the will; which consciousness is at the same time the consciousness of the act. Nor do we need bring forth in opposition to the Positive theory, what may have already occurred to the reader's mind, namely: the first intervention of the will in the phenomena of mind may be the effect of either especial corporeal conditions or of unknown external causes. Even if the arguments of Hobbes and of the fatalists can logically be applied in the doctrines of Büchner, of Littré and in those of the physiologists, as we have seen, they cannot effectually be applied in the doctrines of the determinists who, repudiating all that the metaphysicians postulate in the necessity of the will, reduce the question which we consider to a question of interior observation, pure and proper.

From what precedes we can easily draw the conclusion that the movement of Positive thought in the question of liberty implies, by final analysis, a tacit negation of conscience.

If feeling and immediate self-knowledge, which constitute the principal data of psychology, have any value as scientific testimony, it is just because they enable us to observe directly in itself a force which fully controls us; a control which we realize in the dependence of action on the causal efficacy of mind. A denial of the principle of causality and of force must, therefore, carry with it the refutation of the value of the testimony of the close relation between mind and act implied in the feeling and knowledge that we have of what actually passes in ourselves, and consciousness thus becomes a mirage. It is then considered as a chronicle representing the superficial aspect of the coördination in time of mental facts, and not the inherent force of which they are the results. That the Positive thinkers restrict the validity of internal testimony within so narrow limits as to destroy all faith in it is plainly shown by the fact that they always prefer purely scientific subjects and methods. It is, besides, expressed by one who is less circum-spect than most of the thinkers of that category.



We refer to Buckle, who, in his Introduction to the *History of Civilization in England*, denies free-will, as he proceeds on a disbelief in the veracity of consciousness.

In Italy, Aristide Gabelli follows Positivism, both in principles and method, and he, too, fails to find any value in the testimony of consciousness; but there remains in his theories some vestiges, as it were, of the ideas of liberty and responsibility—a point in his philosophy which has justly been held up to him as an inconsistency, but one which we cannot but regard as one more indication of the spirit of moderation which we have already recognized in the Italian doctrine.

## VII.

In conclusion of the first part we add that we have so far endeavored to point out, as briefly as possible, how the scientific tendency of the Positivists, as expressed by the philosophers who have taken for a general postulate of their method the negations of Hume, leads to an erroneous conception of interior observa- }

tion, and destroys faith in the testimony of consciousness and in the true nature of moral life. Taking a broader view of Positive Ethics, we propose to show in the following pages how the principles and conclusions of the new school explain a close connection between the course of modern Positive thought and a tendency to close criticism which marked philosophy previous to Kant. We shall also see that so far from laying aside metaphysical questions, modern Positivists tend to prepare, if not hasten, a new solution of the great problems of existence and understanding. It has been well to briefly review, in the meantime, Determinism, so as to recognize the new speculative aspect which the theory of voluntary necessity has acquired under the Positive method. Notwithstanding its many contradictions, this new aspect of the Positive theory of the will betrays plainly a design to harmonize, to a certain extent, the current vivid conception of natural laws with the general testimony of consciousness. For the rest, the new doctrine, as a contemporary writer notes, properly understood, is not abso-

lutely irreconcilable with the doctrine of free-will; and in their intermediate position between the fatalists, who base their theories on physiology, and those whose views betray moral indifference, Positive psychologists may finally investigate the limits of human liberty; a broad subject which, although it has long occupied great minds, is yet to be considered with greater reach of thought and investigated with more vigor of analysis.



## PART II.

### THE THEORY OF THE MORAL END.

#### I.

THE reader may have noticed that we have thus far treated the subject analytically, with a view to fully reveal the elements involved in moral nature. We have pointed out how the first element of man's moral nature is to be found in his free moral agency. When we deliberate, we are conscious of various mental conditions coexisting in the act of deliberation; but the essential element in the deliberative process we feel to be the spontaneity of instincts, feelings, and affections, combined with both thought and reason, which, directing the will, are what makes us regard the act as the

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result of determination and reflection. The action which does not originate in this superior and more serene form of mind must always be regarded as nothing more than an instinctive action. It is, in fact, the effect of a necessary impulse; it is one of the many ways in which the spontaneous force of mind is expressed when under the influence of internal and external conditions. In this case the law to which the manifestations of that force conform is the same law which, in the world of sensation, causes the so-called *reflex phenomenon*. Even in the light of the most refined experiments of modern science, naturalists cannot, in our opinion, reduce all psychological facts to one order of *reflex actions*; for they cannot explain the essential difference between the acts of simple instinctive and voluntary spontaneity, and such acts as we feel to be the results of an inherent deliberating mental power which characterizes the individual as a free agent. This is one of the considerations which caused Hegel to think so fruitful in philosophical results the idea of a self-knowing being. The con-

sciousness that we are responsible for our actions is one of the essential elements in our conception of the nature of mental operations; and while it is not conclusively proved that such consciousness is illusory, no one can deny that it is the elementary distinction between the inferior conception of the mind whose acts are almost mechanical in nature, and the higher conception of mind involving conscious-will as the agency by which the act is originally initiated.

But the idea of free will, such as we have expressed, will be incomplete unless we consider it in connection with the no less important idea of *moral end*; an idea absolutely devoid of scientific value if not brought within the range of psychological investigation. In the motions of animal life, in the motions of sense, and in the phenomena the causes of which are partly unknown and partly explained by the current theory of molecular attraction and repulsion, in the motions of appetite and instinct, the tendency to the end inherent in the very nature of the act manifests the efficacy of what

the impulse receives and transmits much less than the universal and harmonious operation of the great combination of forces underlying those phenomena. It is, as it were, the law of the operation, rather than the law of the agent, which, being called into activity by an unconscious necessity alone, appears in this case as something of the character of a medium, and not a primal and true cause. There is in the adult a personal character, a *personality* which, involving mental activity superadded to the necessary force of sense, enables him to appropriate and modify the impressions which the mind receives from without. We freely adapt means to the end which we appreciate through our moral perception, and it is in this free adaptation of means to an end that we realize our standard of merit or demerit. For instance, we know that, while we submit to a law, it is in our power to exert ourselves with a view to enforce that law or to defeat it. The idea of human action such as we form from the analysis of free-will implies, then, the recognition of the moral end as the limitation of free human



agency, and that limitation as the law of free-will also. Such law is the morality or immorality of the act the consequences of which will follow as soon as the end is fixed. Thus we refer free-will to its law. We shall now pass to a study of the Positive doctrine of happiness and utility.

## II.

By his moral faculty man was from the first inclined to a search of the supreme good much more spontaneously than he was inclined to an investigation of human liberty ; and it is in the history of his investigations to that end that we find strongly marked the eternal contrast between the soul and the body, between the ideas of a present and a future life ; the eternal contrast between reason and sense, between the absolute and the relative. The oldest religions and mythologies of Eastern and Western nations which implied the first indistinct outlines of the idea of moral good in positive precepts, or obscured that idea under the form of the fable, opened the course of development

from the rude and indefinite form of that idea in primitive human society to the sublime, and often terrible, form which it assumed in the Vedas, in the Decalogue, in Homer, and, later, in the Tragedies. The scarce documents which throw a faint ray of light on the state of philosophy previous to Socrates do not clearly enough suggest the noteworthy influence which the great problem of the moral end must have had on the Oriental and Ionic doctrines, and particularly on the Pythagorean and Eleatic doctrines. This influence is, however, noticeable in the direction of the school of Socrates, in which the opposition between the speculative method and a tendency to experiment, between the objective idea of good and subjective Eudemonism—an opposition which at all times extended from psychology and metaphysics to ethics—became personified in the two great representatives of Greek thought: Plato and Aristotle. The wide difference, however, which these masters made between absolute morality and the morality whose end is happiness, is quite clear to those familiar with their

works. In Protagoras, good is connected with pleasure, and it approaches the idea of law and order in Gorgias. In the *Philibus* and the *Republic* the conception of good is beyond the transitory, the sensible, and implies the rational, the divine, that which is end in itself. It is certain that the moral direction of those dialogues is quite different from the direction of the Nicomachean ethics; but not even at this point does investigation assume a directly opposite tendency; for, while the question is on the practical end of life, which is to be found in happiness, the idea of happiness which is connected with the notion of the perfect, the transcendental, the relative good, first proposed in the *Stagirites*, is here changed into the absolute good which is end in itself. The two great aspects of the question are much more distinctly marked out by the contrast of the Cyrenaic, Cynical and Epicurean morality with the morality of the Stoics; a contrast which, after being examined by the Romans, receives new light in the Jurisconsults, in the *De Finibus*, in the *De Legibus* and in Marcus Aurelius;

it loses force in Plutarch and Seneca, it becomes of little importance in the metaphysical doctrines of Alexandria, and on the first rising of the philosophy of the Fathers; it survives the opposition of Pagan traditions to Christian reform in the Middle Ages, and finally it reappears as a true doctrine in the Italian schools of the second Renaissance and in Gassendi and Descartes.

If we turn our attention to philosophical studies in modern Europe we see that the question of the moral end is agitated by the English schools with a spirit of broad and earnest criticism. The same diversity of opinion which we have noted on the question of free-will appears again under the form of a truly great problem of philosophy in the opposed schools of intuition and utility. Lecky, a most eminent contemporary historian, thus defines these schools in his *History of European Morals*: "The former school contends that by the constitution of our nature the notion of right carries with it a feeling of obligation; that is to say, a course of conduct is our duty in itself,

and, apart from all consequences, an intelligible and sufficient reason for practicing it; and that we derive the first principles of our duties from intuition. The moralist of the opposite school denies that we have any such natural perception. He maintains that we have by nature no knowledge of merit and demerit, of the comparative excellence of our feelings and actions, and that we derive these notions solely from an observation of the course of life that is conducive to human happiness."

These and other principles which we will hereafter explain form the substance of the two schools. What is particularly notable is that they represent, under their respective titles, an immense variety of opinions and speculative directions. Such a variety of opinions, besides showing the profound need of moral inquiry to which we have attributed the recent development of the Positive doctrines, shows that the reform to be made in the organism and method of knowledge is not as yet mature.

Political movements characterize our times as disturbances of a similar nature marked the

last fifty years of the eighteenth century; but, while in those times the human mind had only to free itself from the debris of a fast demolishing past, at present it must struggle with the sympathies and apathies of old institutions, the excesses of innovators, the innumerable monstrous ideas which, persistently enunciated, hinder true progress; so that we find it much more difficult to politically reorganize and fulfil our solemn obligations to the future. As a river which, tearing away the embankments, overflows in the form of a delta, and is crossed by opposed and dangerous tides as it approaches the mouth, so the events of 1789 and 1793, which revolutionized society, have apparently subsided; but under the superficial calm there are opposed and dangerous influences growing more powerful with the course of events. This apparent calm is the usual effect of the cooling of human passions, and implies the weakness of character which moral science sooner or later perceives. While the theory of the end, which reflects with speculative light the moral sense of a people, is thus discussed

from so many different standpoints, we do not wonder why it has not yet been presented under a truly scientific form.

In this conflict of doctrines the origin and the cause of the prevalence of some of them are clearly discernible. The theory of absolute obligation, which sets out with the investigation of the human act, duly recognizes disinterested affections and the utilitarian tendencies, but it derives the idea of good from something higher, and fixes it in the infinite. This theory has always been opposed by the schools which deny the two fundamental principles upon which it proceeds—the intellectual part manifest in moral phenomena and the relation of good and of law with the absolute. The school of materialists, which lost much of its prestige in the early part of the present century, when Scotch ideas prevailed again in France and German criticism was at the height of its influence, belong to the former order of doctrines, which Cicero called *plebeian*, and is the school the theory of which Büchner and Moleschott ventilate in our time. The moral

theory of that school—if it has one—can only be a theory based on instinct and appetite. It originated with Aristippus and Epicurus, and found its latest exponents in Helvetius and Holbach. Such must be the theory of whoever holds doctrines which do not recognize the reality of the mind. Doctrines of this kind are generally entertained by men of science who by principles and by a certain mental training in positive studies are averse to any mode of inquiry which may lead from premises of inner experience to conclusions of speculative philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Such class includes also a number of Positive philosophers less mindful of speculative results and intent upon extending the range of psychological observation beyond the limits within which it was restricted by Auguste Comte. One of these is Littré. Although he cannot be said to be an absolute

<sup>1</sup> We note with pleasure that this anti-speculative tendency is not common to all Materialists; one of them, Mr. Herzen, in the second edition of his *Physiological Analysis of Free-will*, seems to side with us on broad grounds of philosophy.



follower of Büchner, some points of his studies seem to nearly coincide with the speculations of the German thinker.

The other school, or combination of schools, which repudiates the other element on which is based the theory of absolute obligation is Independent Morality. Its title greatly explains its meaning—a doctrine which is equally removed from materialism, metaphysics, and theology. It recognizes in man rational disinterested affections and the binding force of a notion of moral good, and accepts as an indisputable datum the liberty and responsibility implied in the human act; but, at the same time, it professes that on these foundations alone a whole system of morality can be established without recurring to higher principles or to the reality of an absolute object implying moral obligation. These are the general ideas of some writers in France and Belgium. For these timid and not quite faithful interpreters of internal experience, thought without its object is enough to give absolute value to scientific inference. Human wishes, limiting each other,

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form an order of mutual duties and rights; a dynamics of spontaneous, intellectual and sensible forces. It is clear that all this is not sufficient ground for absolute obligation; and even if those writers have the merit, as Count Mamiani has said, of finding a simple, neat and sound morality, they do not seem to be under the guidance of the higher principles upon which alone the scientific character of a system depends.

We have thus far greatly elucidated one important point of the subject in question. We have determined which of the various contemporary schools of morality is most intimately connected with Positivism with respect to the question of the end of our actions. We shall now lay aside our consideration of those who build the moral theory on physiological facts, and who constitute a class of teachers who have many disciples in France, in Germany and Italy. As we have noted, they do not admit an essential difference between the facts of sense, of appetite, and moral facts properly so-called; they therefore assume from the start

an attitude of opposition to true ethical investigation.

It is clear, however, that independent morality—even if we consider the support that it receives from some Positivists—is not exactly the form of the principles and of the method of the moral doctrines which, as we have pointed out, were explained in England under certain favorable circumstances, and which acquired scientific organism in the traditional course of the experimental ethics as expounded by the Utilitarians. Independent morality regards the absolute as something distinct from and superior to consciousness; but it also considers the ideas of good and of duty as two distinct principles. Jouffroy indicates that such theory has an origin, more or less immediate, in Rationalism.

But the various opinions implied in the morality of Positivism are conclusions following from the same premises. Positive moralists take a common starting-point in a question of method, and to such a question they subordinate all the elements which are gradually in-

cluded in their system through the ever broader range taken by the utilitarian theories. We shall soon explain how it happens that the title *Positive* is generally given to many different schools provided that they agree in some general and rather vague tendency of method. Meantime we have deemed it useful to give a general definition of the difference between Independent Morality and the Inductive Morality of the Positivists; for the definition of that difference may help us to explain the foundations and define the limits of the latter.

In a publication which the opponents of the new doctrines in England have welcomed, Lecky expounds the various systems of morality. With characteristic calm and force of thought and conviction, he comments on the progress of modern thought in questions of morality. He justly condemns the indefinite sense in which the term *inductive* is used by the Positivists in connection with their system of ethics; nor does he fail to blame the theistic school, which also claims to verify in-

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ductively the origin and nature of moral ideas. We observe in this the application of the great principle that truth must not be considered as a privilege, but as the common aim, of all characterized with activity of thought. According to this principle, the investigator will pursue the way which he sincerely believes to be one of true progress, without interfering with those who, pursuing the same path, may precede or follow him in the great march to the desired goal.

The word *inductive*, which Positivists use rather arbitrarily in discussing ethical questions, and which is seldom used correctly in a scientific sense, is, however, sufficient to suggest that the Positive school is historically associated with those who in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries tended to apply the inductive method in the solution of ethical problems. To this connection Lecky refers, and seems to give the new doctrines such validity as is generally derived from tradition and ages, and besides explains how the ethics of modern English schools has found a basis in the phil-

osophy of two previous centuries. In order to substantiate the foregoing statement, it is necessary to go back in the history of the development of moral ideas, and consider the important features which have foreshadowed the progress of speculative thought from an early epoch to the present time, in which we study these doctrines as they are enunciated by the eminent men that constitute the so-called Positive school. We propose to confine ourselves to a review of the English philosophers because they look upon this subject as one of universal importance; besides, in England, Positivism has had an uninterrupted and glorious tradition of more than two hundred years.

### III.

THIS tradition has not so far been well known in Italy, where the speculative movement which Europe saw in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries caused philosophical speculators to form into factions. The names of Bacon, Locke, Hume, and the Scotch school

became known in that country generally through French expositions in which those names appeared associated, in various ways, with the difficulties attending the efforts at a solution of the problems of method and of the understanding. The question of the origin and foundation of moral ideas, so earnestly discussed by the English philosophers of those times, reached, therefore, the thinkers of the Latin nation only as a distant and interrupted echo of the transactions of a great school.

The origin of this school, according to English critics, is to be found with Hobbes, who, being a contemporary of Bacon, of Queen Elizabeth and of Philip II, and witnessing in his European travels the political events consequent on the authority vested in the reason of great states, formulated theories implying the fundamental idea of all such doctrines, as, later, the school of subjective psychology developed and coördinated on the basis of the useful and the relative.

In his doctrine of the sense and appetite, which inevitably leads him to the other doctrine

of the passions and the will, he evidently confines all questions as to the motive of the moral act within the limits of the subject. In fact, if voluntary motions through the imagination have their beginning in sense, and sense is motion communicated by external objects to the human organs, in the state of deliberation there are alternating desires and aversions, hopes and fears, regarding one and the same thing. One of two results follows. Either the thing is judged impossible, or it is done; and this according as aversion or appetite finally triumphs. Now, the last aversion followed by omission, or the last appetite followed by action, is the act of willing; happiness he defines as a continued success in the gratification of our desires. It is easily seen that, according to his theories, there is no fixed and immutable end to which human actions must be directed. The end of life is, like happiness, a continuous and progressive satisfaction of our appetites. His inquiry into voluntary actions as originating in sense proceeds both on physiology and politics. Moral relations are to him but civil relations

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growing out of conflicting instincts and passions ; and he rests the political part of his system on one constant, inflexible idea—*Force*. Such theories could certainly not favor a development of the conception of absolute ethics, and much less an immediate application of its theories to the practical pursuits of life. In fact, nearly all the latest doctrines of Positivists, on the manifold question of ethics, whether bearing on education or civil laws, appear to have some of the vigor that the demolishing logic of Hobbes retains to this day.<sup>1</sup>

Although the various directions which English thought subsequently took in the field of moral philosophy are referable to the influence of Hobbes, we do not find, on close examination, that his influence alone explains the positive tendency which has ultimately prevailed in English psychology. Hobbes did not admit disinterested affections, bringing forth in justification of this denial the same reasons which Helvetius and Bentham reproduced more than

<sup>1</sup>See Alexander Bain's *Moral Science*, Part II, The Ethical Systems.

a century later to sustain views more or less identical with those of the founder of materialism. Yet, this negative character of his theory had not the effect of bringing, by preference, the opposite schools into such a course of inquiry as might imply a strictly psychological investigation of human actions. Descartes had already represented, by his famous *Cogito, ergo Sum*, that thought exists independently of its objects; but this he did with little or no effect in that age and in a country like England, where most of the philosophers belonged to the clergy, and theology and Platonism had still a strong hold on the universities. Growing rather oppressed under the restrictions of the experimental method which Bacon had advocated, philosophers would lay aside every now and then the study of nature and psychology in order to breathe more freely in the atmosphere of metaphysical speculation. The effect of this habit, having now become perceptible in the applications of the deductive method and in the geometrical nature of demonstration, characterized by itself the two great

est systems of the seventeenth century: that is, the system of Malebranche and the ethics of Spinoza. The influence of this modification was soon felt in England, and the prevalence of the *à priori* method over introspective observation became apparent in some of the doctrines enunciated then in that country; while the speculations of Cudworth and Clarke assumed a breadth which has not marked the views of the moral philosophers that England has since produced. The absolute necessity which true moralists propounded in their opposition to Sensualists and Naturalists like Hobbes, and the analysis of the intellectual and rational functions which determine human conduct, in place of the cold anatomical study of instincts and sensations, show that the first school of metaphysical moralists had in view a far higher scientific achievement, a higher position in science, which English moralists lost sight of as soon as they confined their studies to the moral sense.

This subjective direction could not remain long unexpressed. Cudworth (1617-88) and

Clarke (1675-1729), with a bent of mind more metaphysical than psychological, reduced the sum of moral questions to the immutability of intuitional and rational principles; and, considering such principles in themselves, they gave them an order and a hierarchy. But no sooner had philosophy become exclusively interested in the study of internal and external experience, in conformity to the method of Bacon and Locke, than it entered a narrow sphere, and the psychological analysis of feelings, of tendencies, and of the acts of the subject, inevitably became the sole possible object of ethical investigation. Under the new discipline, Richard Cumberland had investigated, before Locke, principally, the sentiments of benevolence and mutual love; and, in his opposition to Hobbes, he had shown that in the satisfaction of those sentiments human happiness and the end of human life were to be found. It can, therefore, be said that, while his doctrine is greatly in accordance with Clarke's, it is the doctrine in which first appeared, in contrast with the egotism of Hobbes, the true

conception of the collective and common utility which Bentham afterward expressed in his principle of *the greatest happiness of the greatest number*.

But the supporters of subjective ethics who, excluding all metaphysical elements, rested their theories simply on the results of psychological examination, could not constitute themselves into a school, properly so called, and assume the habit and method of true science, except under the direct influence of the doctrines of Locke (1632-1704). The students of English philosophy know, nevertheless, how uncertain and perplexed this great philosopher is in matters of moral philosophy, notwithstanding that he repeatedly asserts that ethics, "*by a steady contemplation of the relations of its fundamental notions, might, and ought to, become as perfect a science as geometry.*" They know, likewise, that, although he finds an identity between the voluntary act and appetite, he propounds human freedom and responsibility, and that he recurs at once to divine authority, to civil law and to public

opinion in order to find an explanation of the origin of moral obligation. In spite of his uncertainties, there prevails at the bottom of Locke's moral doctrine both Sensualism and Determinism; and, besides, what must, at any rate, have contributed to make him influential with the moralists that subsequently formed the empirical school, there were the proofs which such a doctrine brought forth against the simplicity and independence of moral ideas. In an analysis of the innate practical principles, contained in the third chapter of his *Essay on the Understanding*, Locke arrives at the conclusion that those principles are not self-evident, owing to their complexity; and as they are not universally accepted, it follows that they are not innate. His analysis cannot be said to be rigorous in every respect, but it implies one of the first evidences of a certain tendency, a science of morality, by the method of the dissection and reduction of psychological facts; a method which, in time, became common to nearly all the English schools. Since then those philosophical schools have followed a par-

ticular course. Their tendency has become steadily clearer, until we see it assume definite form in the method of the psychological investigation of the origin and nature of moral affections and of the idea of obligation.

This prevailing method of research is especially applied to the investigation of the nature and value of disinterested sentiments; for a strong objection to the egotistic theories of Hobbes remains yet to be removed. The author of the *Leviathan*, and also Locke, reduced the ideas of good and evil to the simple feelings of pleasure and pain; but they did not, in this way, explain conclusively (as Cumberland said) the actions in the performance of which we have in view the good of others; and much less did they explain the notion of duty, which, regardless of any external interest and sanction, is felt in the depth of human nature. This objection is, no doubt, rather old, as modern Positivists and Utilitarians are prone to tell us; but it is an objection which they have not as yet removed by the efforts of nearly three centuries; and we do not hesi-

tate to say that the broader views which English philosophers have expressed in the great controversy on moral principles since Cumberland and Locke are mainly due to the speculative evidence of that objection, and to its influence on the feelings and the affections.

Some of the most glorious names of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are associated with it. The first philosopher who, under the influence of Locke, turned ethics, as Erdmann remarks, into a natural history of moral acts, into a theory of virtue, was Lord Shaftesbury (1670-1713). He initiated the esthetics of moral feelings, and recognized happiness as the ultimate end of human life; but what he meant by happiness he could find only in the harmony of individual feelings; in the harmony of self-interest, self-love, with the social instinct and the love of others.

In opposition to this doctrine, based on feeling and instinct, Joseph Butler (1692-1752) brought forth, in his *Sermons*, a doctrine in which consciousness was made the foundation of the conception of virtue and of obligation;



showing that the essence of moral life consists in our aspirations to the former and in our obedience to the latter, regardless of what the consequences of our conduct may be to others, and apart from any consideration of instinct, sanction or utility, individual or general. On the other hand, Hutcheson (1694–1747) elaborated a system in which he further developed the doctrine of the moral sense, holding that it is the moral faculty that leads us to mutual love, and that self-love is legitimate and good in proportion as the actions which it prompts result in good to others. This was not a new principle of his system; it was originally expressed by Lord Shaftesbury; but Hutcheson, the founder of the Scotch school, determined and demonstrated that principle by an original method. Assuming full knowledge of man, with the view to fix the aim of moral philosophy, he made a very minute analysis of the faculties and of the sentiments. This analysis, which is comprised in the three books of his posthumous work, *A System of Moral Philosophy*, very distinctly anticipates the

broad views of the Scotch school. It is true that, as Hutcheson, Smith and Reid felt the influence of the experimental method, their investigations became limited to the feelings and the affections—to the subject. But we maintain that the strong opposition to the Encyclopedists and to the doctrines of the Sensationalists and the Skeptics in the last century, and the vigorous way in which the truths implied in the doctrine of consciousness are now-a-days upheld against the injurious theories of modern Criticism and Empiricism, are facts in the development of philosophical thought to be chiefly referred to the influence of the Scotch school.

#### IV.

It would be well to briefly consider the causes of the opposition and defense to which we have just referred; for their consequences directly bear on the material and form of modern Positive ethics. If we weigh the value of proofs and the literary and scientific standing of the controversialists, the question

of the origin and nature of disinterested affections does not appear to have been decided when it was so earnestly agitated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Illustrious names, great minds, worthy institutions were divided on the question, and the general mind, perplexed between traditional authority and the incentive of the new doctrines, could not easily reach a definite conclusion on the subject in question. The schools of Hobbes and Locke, both of Baconian descent, represented for the English mind the national glory of the method of science by the application of which, it was believed, an end had been put to the troubles of the schoolmen and metaphysicians; but the religious element did not fail to rise in opposition to the bold negations of the new thinkers in a country where the spirit of the Reformation, opposed to Rome and to her dogmas, had for long centuries been identified with a deep moral sentiment. Thus supported by eminent men and by an enlightened and impartial public opinion, each

system was represented by an equal number of schools.

But a close study of the speculative aspect of the question, in which opposite directions of thought appeared evenly balanced, shows that one of them ultimately prevailed. The reasons of such prevalence we have already assigned. The eternal protest of conscience against the egotistical theories of Hobbes and Locke, and the absolute, *irreducible* nature of the principles and ideas of responsibility and obligation, were proofs which acquired greater scientific influence as the supporters of absolute morality laid aside the problem of the mystery of origin, and investigated the real nature of moral facts through the immediate observation of consciousness. Herein consists the real merit of the Scotch; and it is gratifying that another great philosopher, whose views generally coincide with those of the opposite school, should accord with them at least on this particular point of the question. Lecky and Bain, whose authority cannot be doubted, recognize David Hume as one of the expo-

nents of disinterested affections. The former, who does not accept the identity which some modern critics claim to find between the views of Bentham and those of Hume, quotes a passage in which the latter explains moral approbation and disapprobation as originating in a particular faculty of sentiment.<sup>1</sup> Although in the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* the theory of end is referred to the conception of utility, there is in it an improvement of method, as the author introduces into the question the difference which Butler had previously established between the elements of Reason and Sentiment which concur in our moral judgment. This distinction being examined simultaneously by Price in his *Review of the Principal Moral Questions*, caused him

<sup>1</sup> *History of European Morals*, by Lecky, page 4. In a note the author quotes several passages from the first paragraph of the *Enquiry Concerning Morals*. This is what we allude to above. Mr. Lecky adds that the two writers to whom Hume was most indebted were Hutcheson and Butler. See Alexander Bain's *Mental and Moral Science*; see, also, Lecky's note on page 21 of the above quoted work.

to refer to the understanding the first and determining agency of moral actions; a doctrine which is very similar to Clarke's. Thus the theory of absolute morality, without deviating from a psychological course, gained ground notwithstanding so many contradictors. It is truly beautiful to meditate on history so as to perceive through the veil which open contradictions are apt to cast on this question the course of development through which great minds are harmoniously led to the truth; and to feel, likewise, the impulses which the opposed schools gave to each other with an effect which, although disavowed at the time by the contending parties, reappears now as a new acquisition in the scientific world, as the result of the conflicting forces underlying the dynamics of systems.

## V.

THIS effect became apparent with the development of the theory of the association of ideas. It is a theory which was not unknown to the ancients. We gather it from some pas-

sages of Aristotle, and the Epicureans foreshadowed it in reasoning on the origin and nature of affections, and especially on the nature of friendship. It was first defined by Locke, and Hume put it in proper speculative form; while Hutcheson, in his treatise on the Passions, applied it to the doctrine of choice, which he termed *secondary*. An almost unknown priest, named Gay, accepting, as irrefutable, the arguments of Hutcheson in support of the existence of a moral sense in the adult, attempted to reconcile this fact with the doctrine of Locke, whose adherent he was. This he did in a brief dissertation, from which Hartley—as he himself owns—formed his first idea of the theory which, in 1747, he applied to the whole subject of mind. This application is of especial importance in our criticism, as it is the sign of the influence which absolute morality had on the mind of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and it shows, also, that the opposite school was, at the same time, becoming more conscientious of its own method. Even if the arguments of Hobbes and Locke

seemed, for a time, to disprove disinterested affections, and the ideas of virtue and of duty as innate elements, they could not long hold out against a serious criticism, and deny those elements, such as they really are, and as they are known to us. It was, therefore, necessary to recognize them as genuine internal facts; and, since the inductive school wanted to show by analysis that those ideas were not primal and original facts of the mind, but that they could be reduced to other facts less complex, it was necessary, in such a case, to point out the psychological process by which those ideas could have been formed. Such a necessity of method, which Utilitarian moralists recognized and appreciated, shows that the psychology of the negative schools had so far developed as to give, afterward, to the ethics of the Positivists the scientific organism which marks it at present. After this we can briefly outline the doctrine of Hartley, which has been accepted by Bain and Mill, and by nearly all the Positive moralists.

In opposing the principles of subjective eth-



ics, according to which the individual desires everything by and for himself, those who believed in disinterested sentiments, and in the idea of a moral good which is end in itself, asked how the phenomena of desire could take place and elude consciousness. Many examples were adduced in answer to the question. Money, it was said, has nothing in itself which is desirable, but, since it is the means of procuring whatever we desire, its idea becomes so associated with that of pleasure that afterward we love it only for itself, and so much so that sometimes we prefer it to whatever we may acquire with it. Examples were afterward multiplied. Power, glory, praise—things which we seek for the use and satisfaction that we derive from the possession of them—we grow to love for themselves alone, to such an extent that we sometimes sacrifice life itself for them, love being thus transferred to the actions by which they are acquired. It is the same in the case of moral sentiments and virtuous acts. Beneficence, justice, charity, are practiced only for

the real pleasure and use which we realize from them; but as the idea of them becomes associated in our minds with that of the esteem of our kind, of mutual services, and with the hope of reward, they become, through the influence of education, of habit, and of example, absolute objects of our desires and acts. It is ever the same phenomenon transformed in various aspects. That which we at first seek and desire as the means to an end we afterward desire as end in itself, with the difference, however—says Mill—that, while the desire of power and glory may often make man dangerous to society, virtue makes him beneficial, and for this reason the love of virtue must be encouraged and promoted by the Utilitarian school. Hartley and his followers recognize, therefore, moral consciousness as an important subject of interior observation, and in this they differ from older schools; but, by a process which Lecky happily calls a strange *philosophical alchemy*, the theory of such consciousness, with its desires of an absolute and transcendental good, originates, according to

their method, in the strictest and most systematic egotism.


A proof of this we find in the history of the doctrines which we criticise. With the general improvement of psychological doctrines in the school of inductive morality, the tradition of the principle of self-interest implied therein since Hobbes was never lost. In the early part of last century, Mandeville, desuming all moral ideas from institutions, prepared the sophisms of Helvetius. But the narrowness of his method, by which he could not solve one single question, and the need of finding in nature a sounder basis for the Utilitarian theories, were such as to make the new school less and less disposed to face rigorous consequences. It is true that, even if we take into account the objections made to it by Brown, the doctrine of Paley may be regarded as a notable improvement of the general theory. Paley, like his adherents in the Inductive school, attaches absolute importance to the principle of utility, deriving all the influence of moral command from sanction alone. But, in rec-

ognizing that it can also originate in the idea of a future life and of a supreme Legislator, Paley's doctrine points to the broad method which caused many schools to be attracted by the Utilitarian theories. Of the writers that prepared the alliance, as it were, of the Positive method with Experimental ethics, Paley is nowadays the most quoted. It is true that his authority cannot be greater than Bentham's, but he and Hume can be considered as the precursors of Bentham. Not only was Paley the leader of his school: he was, also, its strongest and broadest ordainer. Herein he did little that was new, but he corrected much, made sound and systematized what had been done before. A thorough Englishman, and an old resident amid those great institutions which are, personally, the sense of the nation, he expressed by the experimental method the essence of the doctrine most conformable to the calculating and industrial spirit of the age. In morality, his conception of good and evil desumed from pleasure and pain, and the arguments against the belief in disinterested

acts, bring him back suddenly to Hobbes and Helvetius; but, to judge of the moral value of an action according to the good or evil which is caused by it is, to say the least, a judgment founded on a happily-found formula of systems which, when applied, as Paley applied it, to all possible moral and civil relations, acquires more weight and value only in the minds of those who are already converted. The influence which the works of Bentham have on English ethics depends not so much on their speculative merit as on the strong connection and sure and absolute tone of his affirmations; we say affirmations, because, even if he discusses and analyzes keenly in various parts of his works, his observations are seldom to the true philosophical points of the doctrines, or to their development in history. In his rapid and nervous style thought has an effect like a few strokes of the artist's brush which, being broadly and decidedly put on, give life to a whole figure; and to his qualities as a writer is perhaps due, in a great measure, the reputa-

tion which he enjoys in Europe as the most illustrious propounder of Utilitarian theories.

Inductive ethics may be said to have reached in Paley and Bentham the degree of scientific maturity in which Positivism found it. Other great writers who professed it in the early part of the present century, as James Mill and John Austin, simply contributed to the further development of its principles by elucidating and amplifying them through psychological analysis and through the doctrine of association. In reviewing the history of the great question of morals, as defined so far, we see that it was agitated by the highest minds of northern Europe for more than two centuries and a half. It was first agitated between Hobbes and the metaphysicians, and it continued to be discussed between the school of Locke and the Scotch school, with the triumph of the latter. It ended with Bentham, in whom Utilitarian views almost absolutely predominated, and we see it finally culminate in the ethical system of the Positive school. While the rude egotism of Hobbes seems to



find affinity in the psychological method and in the analyses of Locke and Hume, the undeniable evidence of disinterested affections and of moral ideas which the opponents set forth in favor of their theory of experience causes the inductive method to be further improved by the theory of association. This is an example of the achievements which are attained by the opposition of opinions in a broad and impartial discussion; and it is also an example of the intimate relation between the intellectual life of a nation and its history. The advance and improvement which we have been considering in English ethics as taking place since Hobbes, even in the midst of the contradictions of two great schools, is in the world of thought what in the civil life of England has grown out of the good sense of the two parties which, although they have divided it for some centuries, do not impair its strength; and, balancing each other in power, those parties preserve and develop its institutions.

## VI.

THE foregoing historical considerations will enable us to undertake more confidently the analysis of the Positive doctrines concerning the idea of good; because this Utilitarian theory implies such a variety of elements that even the most careful critic may become confused in analyzing it unless he considers traditionally the various scientific results which, like strata in new ground, have accumulated to form it. The Utilitarian theory of the end, as we find it defined by English writers, implies all the tendencies of the empirical method and of the selfish philosophy of Hobbes, the critical review of moral principles initiated by Locke, and the conception of universal utility, as it appears well defined for the first time, and the direction of Bentham's views; besides, it does not exclude the theological ideas of Paley, nor does it exclude the ideas of sympathetic affections held by Cumberland and Adam Smith; and, finally, it explains disinterested sentiments and the conception of duty by the



theory of association. All this material, which preceding schools have already elaborated, the new school wants to put in a new form and give it a value of method. It has, however, been well to point out what old elements have prepared the new doctrines, and the improvements which opposed schools have made in them, in order to avoid the mistake, commonly made by some modern critics, of recognizing absolute originality in every theory recently enunciated. Losing sight of the traditional course of philosophy, they are apt to throw doubt upon the progress of thought, so that we often see philosophical development denied in our day, when such progress is manifest in the very doctrines of the opposition.

In examining the present state of philosophical studies in the English school, it is easily seen that utilitarian morality prevails both on account of the number of adherents it has and of the favorable consideration which it generally receives from modern scientific thought. This prevalence, however, is not sufficient to prevent the frequent balancing of the two

schools in the broad and careful discussion of principles in which nearly the entire English Press participates. If the Utilitarian theory of morality is supported by such eminent men as Bain, Mill, Bailey and Spencer,<sup>1</sup> the school of Intuition is represented by others equally celebrated: for instance, Whewell and Mansel. The former presented, in his *Lessons on the History of Moral Philosophy in England*, a system which Mill deemed worthy of a long and sound confutation from him. In that system Whewell modified the opposed doctrines so as to demonstrate that in the harmony of pleasure and honesty with wisdom consists the good which is to be the end of life. The latter sets forth with new and strong arguments the distinctive qualities of moral ideas, and deduces their absolute value from a Divine nature. The theory of intuition, supported as it is by

<sup>1</sup> James Frederick Ferrier. (1808-64), who belongs to the experimental psychological school, points out, in his *Lectures on Greek Philosophy*, that he departs from the doctrine which substitutes happiness for virtue as supreme good.

men of high authority and profound thought, finds support also among the more cultivated class of people, to the influence of which we may attribute the fact that the expounders of Utilitarianism have sometimes publicly discountenanced the extreme consequences of the Positive method and deprecated the notion that they are followers of Auguste Comte. These and other reasons, which we have before pointed out, explain how the doctrine of Utilitarianism, as it appears in the works of some English and European writers, proceeds on one of the broadest and truly reconciling methods that have been adopted in the pursuit of ethical studies.

It would be out of place, on this occasion, to expose in full the substance of the new doctrines. It may suffice to say that they do not essentially differ from the old doctrines. It is ever the same philosophy which, setting out with a theory of sense, represents the end of human life as immediate or future pleasure or its equivalent: well-calculated utility. A philosophy which mistakes the consequences of an act for its moral value; it mistakes moral

sanction, whatever it may be, for the law of good ; a philosophy, therefore, which overlooks the essential difference between the object of pleasure and the object of duty. This is a doctrine which may be summarized in what Mill and many others have accepted : actions are right in proportion as they promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. But *happiness* has so broad a meaning that in it we may include all the lowest and highest pleasures of the individual and of society. The historical progress of the theory ruled by the principle of utility can therefore be measured by the progress which this simple idea of the end has made from age to age, without considering whether it grew so as to absorb gradually new elements of the moral act, or its application extends from individual to social well-being. Now, the progress of contemporaneous systems in the latter respect is undeniable. The philosophy based on sense could only profess an absolute and vulgar egotism ; but the influence of contrary schools, combined

with the doctrines of Hartley and with the method of interior observation, prepared the development of the principle which recognizes as the only end of human actions, not the greatest good of the individual, but the greatest good of the greatest number.<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding the tendency of Bentham to a less broad doctrine, Mill, Bain, and all the schools to which they belong, agree on this principle, and endeavor to prove it does not disagree with the substance of their system; nay, actuated by the power of sympathies and of mutual affections, they go so far as to justify individual sacrifice for the good of the many. What force such arguments may have will be known to whoever meditates on the consequences of the premises of the Utilitarian school.

N. B.

Not less worthy of note is another late improvement of the Utilitarian theory. The objections which were made to it, owing to the anxiety which certain fastidious and popular systems excited in some generous natures, were

<sup>1</sup>See Chapter ii. *Utilitarianism*. By John Stuart Mill.

based principally on the moral degradation of actions supposing that the only aim of man is a discrimination between pleasure and pain. This consequence was not noticed by Bentham, but Mill thought of obviating it, in determining by a law of feeling the nature of the pleasures and pains which the Utilitarian school regards as the end and sanction of our acts. Such pleasures and pains, he says, are the pleasures and pains of man, and not those of the brute; they are the highest affections of the soul and of intelligence; and it is in conformity to the principle of utility to recognize, in fact, some kinds of pleasures much more desirable and of much more value than others. This observation becomes Mill and the reconciling spirit of his doctrines; but such an observation is not necessarily prompted by the principle of his doctrines; because, as a contemporary has well remarked, if we examine what those pleasures really are, we find that very few would propose them as the purpose of their conduct, and Mill's principle, based on the great-

est good of the greatest number, seems to con-  
tradict his system.<sup>1</sup>

*Yes.*

This instance leads us naturally to another. Considering the infinite variety of customs and conditions under which man lives, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine what is the greatest pleasure, the true utility of man. Nor need the believers in Mill's doctrine answer that the standard of our judgment will be the pleasure to which all, independently of any sense of moral obligation, will give the preference. In the first place, of what pleasure can we say so much? In nothing else are the individual and society, even aside from the different natures of individuals, more liable to change under the influence of the times, and, thus changing the type, the ideal of pleasure will change whenever the claim of utilitarian obligation changes. And would it not be better, since we need a certain moral standard, to recognize it in that immutable idea of duty which the adherents of the school in question

<sup>1</sup> *A Few Words on Utilitarianism.* By Robert Williams.

regard only as illusory, notwithstanding the fact that it is regarded in conscience as the only inevitable motive by which conduct should be determined? Moreover, granted that the highest and true happiness of humanity could be found in certain conditions, who will assure us that those conditions will ever be realized? The laments on the miseries of life are the expressions of the human voice which resounds perhaps in the remotest history of the world. The great poets who, in all ages, have been the interpreters of that voice; the great bards who, meditating on themselves, could catch one single note of that sad harmony of the heart, have always been the most popular, and have never become obsolete. This proves that every age and every nation has its sorrows, as every stage of life has its fears. If Greece had Sappho and the Romans Lucretius, we have Byron and Leopardi.

But Mill, like a true Englishman, does not give in, but insists on the point of his doctrine upon which conciliation is most possible. The happiness which he proposes as the end of



human actions is, according to him, the highest and most continuous enjoyment; it is the comparative tranquility of an honest and laborious life for the good of our kind. By a fine analysis of human tendencies he tries to show what a large source of pleasure is to be found in the exercise and cultivation of the mind: in the objects of nature, the improvements of art, a poetical imagination, the memories of the past, and the expectations of the future. He does not confine himself to the individual; but, including in his consideration the whole life of a people, he shows that it is reasonable to hope, in the present state of knowledge, that art and science, in opposition to the difficulties of life, will, in time, diminish and remove most of its troubles. The picture which the great English philosopher draws of a happy man is, undoubtedly, beautiful; nor can we say that it is impossible, because we believe in progress ourselves; but, besides that the ideal to which he points is far beyond the real, what we do not quite understand is that Mill should ever have thought that in such a way he might

have strengthened the moral question from his point of view. That a certain degree of happiness can be attained to by man, and that he may realize it by virtuous acts—nay, that real utility is always connected with honesty, no serious supporter of absolute morality can or will question. But the question is not on this point. In pondering on what the moral end of life may be, the moralist does not mean to find out what is, or what may be, the consequence, or even the ultimate result, of an action; he accepts the word *end* in the highest and purest sense that human will has yet given it; in which sense it implies, not what follows actions, but the law of the action in that which precedes and determines it. It is manifest, therefore, that any question on morality must be a question of the moral end of our acts. The moral principles of human conduct cannot be absolutely deduced from a doctrine which finds the claim to obligation in a conception the elements of which are known to us only when we know the effects of our acts. We shall hereafter see that.

even according to the supporters of this theory, one of its most unsatisfactory points is what we have alluded to. We have meanwhile suggested it before examining the philosophical process which the Positive school believes to have strengthened the foundation on which rests its doctrine.

## VII.

THIS process is fully shown in Mill's work entitled *Utilitarianism*. The great English economist had previously treated the subject in two long articles in the *Westminster Review*. One of them, written in 1838, is a discussion on the doctrines of Bentham; to the other, which he wrote long before, we have already alluded in connection with the moral writings of Whewell. But in these articles Mill only examined the principle of utility in its applications and in connection with a criticism of it by two of his contemporaries. He subsequently proposed to expound that principle, as he conceived it, in full relation to the moral and civil orders, and endeavored

to refute thus all the objections raised against it by opposed schools, and correct all its misinterpretations. Such is the *résumé* of the work the principle of which we have just discussed, and the method of which we shall presently examine. There is not in it any lack of that precision of conception and form, that *rerum lucidus ordo*, characteristic of writings which include in a brief space a broad sweep of meditation; nor can we deny, if we take into account the inevitable insufficiencies of the subject, that this work of Mill gives, in as brief a space as possible, the most accurate idea of the doctrine of Utility at the most mature stage of its development since Bentham.

After prefixing a chapter on general considerations, and another on the true meaning of his doctrine, the author begins the discussion of the subject proper in the third chapter, in which he speaks of the ultimate sanction of the Utilitarian principle.

Of the essential properties of moral ideas known to us through moral perception, none is more certain than their binding influence on

our actions. It is manifested both in sentiment and judgment. Homicide, fraud, theft and the like we not only, without any sense of self-interest, abhor and naturally shun, but we consider them afterward by the light of reason and see them harmful, wicked in themselves. It is true that we feel so because we perceive in the perpetration of such acts the violation of a law that appeals to conscience; but the same remorse which continues in the criminal, the feeling of a violated obligation, is not always the consequence of his opposition to certain measures, the results of which might be beneficial to himself. This difference is unquestionable, and is still a great difficulty for Utilitarians to surmount whenever they claim constant, binding force for their principle. The English philosopher that we are considering saw this difficulty, and with more vigor than Bain, who derives the efficacy of moral ideas from positive laws without caring to explain further, asks wherein is the binding force of the Utilitarian principle: the force which he calls the *sanction* of the principle. The sanction, he

A.B. | replies, of any other principle is also the sanction of the Utilitarian principle. It is both internal and external. The external is the hope of favor and the fear of displeasure from our fellow-creatures, or from the Ruler of the Universe; the internal sanction, which is the same whatever may be the fundamental principle of morals, is reduced to an internal state—to a *pain more or less intense which in properly cultivated moral natures attends the violation of duty*. This feeling, if disinterested and connected with the pure idea of duty, is the *essence of conscience*. From his previous words we see how conscience is for Mill a derived and complex phenomenon; the mixed result of associations and sympathies, of love and fear. Religious feelings, recollections of childhood, social egoisms and affections are elements of consciousness. We shall presently see whether history affords proofs in support of the Utilitarian view of moral perception. A view which implies, as it were, a geological inquiry of the mind, because Utilitarians see in consciousness nothing but an accumulation of moral strata superadded

to each other through education and civilization.

At this point the positive method pursued by him in his work appears more clearly. Two questions are in Mill's mind. In common with Bain, he finds the moral principle within the narrow range of the subject itself, basing the idea of duty and the sanction of our acts on a complexity of feelings and ideas. We might question whether those feelings and ideas are the product of nature or of habit. This question he seems to obviate very easily, replying that it matters very little whether they are innate or not so long as they are natural and spontaneous and manifest a law, an inherent activity of the mind. In this we agree with him to a certain point; but this method of removing the difficulties of the subject does not seem to be equally effectual when applied to another question, raised by himself, on the existence of an absolute object, an object distinct from mind, to which moral force may be referred. The philosophers who are not satisfied with the solution of this problem on pure grounds of ex-

perience Mill calls *transcendental*, and are those who object to his view of sanction. He makes an internal fact, a feeling, an idea, the only ground of duty; but does the idea of obligation spring from conscience, and is not this conscience, as he says, a phenomenon? Therefore, how can an absolute standard of conduct be deduced from a mutable and subjective fact, a standard which will ever be a principle on which a science of morality can be based? Mill replies: Whatever a person's opinion may be on this point of ontology, the force he is really urged by is his own subjective feeling, and is exactly measured by its strength. Aside from that internal fact there is no obligation; and the idea of an absolute object related to the law of right does not give any more weight to the authority which conscience gives to the moral command.

An able opponent of the Positive doctrines, H. Hodgson, resumes his polemic against them in his *Theory of Practice*, observing that they always confound a matter of fact with a point of science. Mill uses a very subtle logical



artifice. He claims to show that Reason, in assenting to the idea of an objective principle which may be the law in the fulfilment of virtuous acts, is not to be regarded as the direct and explicit motive which determines the moral act. The direct motive of the moral act is, according to him, a sense of obligation; and he claims that if he can prove that such a fact of consciousness is the only *sanction* of all morality, and can demonstrate by a scientific analysis that that sense of obligation is the source of the general idea of utility, his system will also be demonstrated. At this point the mistake or the ambiguity of his reasoning, is, as usual, implied in an imperfect analysis of internal phenomena, in the half-way psychology to which the Positive school, impatient of speculation, recurs whenever it deems it opportune. No one will question to Mill that the moral standard of right and wrong assumes a subjective and sensible form in the conscience of man in proportion as that standard influences him. If an atheist, a utilitarian and a theist were agreed on the per-

formance of some solemn duty, they could not express the motive of their conduct otherwise than, We feel obliged. But this expression does not explain all. That obligation, we admit, is a motive, a direct antecedent, from which our will cannot be separated without incurring the painful feeling of self-reproach; but there is, besides all this, a higher motive: the object of moral judgment which would have an efficiency, it is true, without the concurrence of the free mental activity which causes us to either accept or reject that judgment, but in the absence of that activity this object of moral judgment is the true and determining cause of the act. This object is the idea of right in itself. It has its source in the *absolute*, and is the beacon which throws light on the varied and manifold realm of facts. Considered in its pure *ideal* aspect, this idea illumines but does not verify, unless its influence is brought to bear on feeling and the will by the mysterious law of the inner unity of man. We may then ask what would be the value of the sense of obligation

in a rational being if that which is imposed on him as a guidance of conduct is not recognized by him as a supreme and infallible object of reason. Considering duty, therefore, as a pure fact in the subject which fulfils it, it is in itself inexplicable, and has no more elements of morality than instinct or appetite. It assumes the nature of a moral fact as soon as the philosopher discovers its intimate and necessary relationship with the highest terminus: the law of right. In determining the idea of a moral standard within the very limits of science, it makes a difference whether we draw that idea from the efficacy of an absolute object above the mind, or from the conception of the useful, which we form through subjective affections alone. The two sides of the idea may become indistinct in the immediate perpetration of the act; but the difference of those two sides, and sometimes even their contrast which we perceive through reflection, is what causes us to become conscious of merit or demerit, and furnishes the data on which we may judge of the morality or immorality of our

A.B.  
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actions. The sense of injustice exercised toward another, which prompts us to a hasty vengeance, is not yet properly a moral fact; it is not a moral fact until we reflect and become conscious that in defending the weak we exercise a right and fulfil a duty. Now, there does not seem to be any essential difference between the former instinctive act and the blow with which the assassin strikes down an officer to save the life of his comrade, and there is not at first sight anything which will prevent us from seeing a utilitarian tendency in both acts. But the difference becomes very clear as soon as the philosopher refers those acts to the absolute standard of morality. He then perceives that the utilitarian tendency is in conformity to the law in the first impulse, while it is not in the reflection we allude to above.

4 By the imperfect analysis in which Positive moralists indulge to observe the human fact as the physicist observes the fall of a body, they recognize the direct motive of an act which is generally the result of instinct, or

\* All this is very Confused.

an involuntary impulse, in place of the causes which make us truly conscientious in our actions. . Mill's Utilitarianism seems erroneous when, from the mere fact that man, as he alleges himself, is prompted to aid his fellow-creatures by sympathetic impulses, he claims to scientifically deduce that such aid is for us a true moral obligation. For, it is impossible, as a modern critic observes, to deduct or induct the most remote idea of the obligation to do or not do something from the fact alone, from the fact not considered by the light of a superior principle. If Mill had carried his investigation further, and had tried to find in some social sympathies the true reason why some acts, which find their origin in those sympathies, are in conscience morally obligatory, he would have found it in a higher idea—in the absolute law of right, by which alone all distinction between private and public welfare is destroyed and the relative is harmonized with the absolute good.

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## VIII.

IN that part of the third chapter of Mill's work which we have just considered, the author has to remove the instances adduced in contradiction of the subjective origin of the Utilitarian standard of morality. But his premises are such that another difficulty, no less important than those we have referred to, meets him at the start. He founds morality on a sense of mutual obligation, but since it is obviously easy to oppose him on the ground that such a sense, considered in itself as originating in the subject, can lose strength or altogether change, he would show how the bonds of social feeling are strengthened by the fact that the contrast of private interests disappears in the common good. At this point Mill reminds us of the architect who, being perfectly satisfied with the artistic effect of the design of a structure, forgot the importance of solid foundation, and, being obliged to build on soft ground, thought that he might get over the trouble by thoroughly binding together the upper parts of the edifice. Here also individual good is

made the principal factor in the Utilitarian doctrine. It is in the premises, and is implied in his inferences from the pure and simple instinctive tendency of the individual to self-comfort; which tendency becomes a wish for the good of others when we reflect that it is necessary to live united, that discord has evil consequences, and that coöperation of desires causes assimilation between the members of society, so that private welfare increases in proportion to the well-being of the public. We do not deny that all this is set forth with much art and truth by the great English philosopher, who, overlooking the weak points of his doctrines, perceived that the only way by which the Utilitarian school could be reconciled with modern philosophy was to efface, as much as possible, in those doctrines, the traces of their origin in the selfish philosophy of Hobbes.

For the rest, the harmony which he finds between individual interest and universal utility are facts which, however multiplied, will ever be a splendid confirmation of the fact that there is a harmony between absolute order and happi-

ness, and, considered by themselves, these facts will never point to the law which causes that harmony. The inclination to do good to others because it will finally prove useful to ourselves is a phenomenon of instinct; and although that inclination turns afterward to a desire, we are not aware that any Positivist has yet shown *why* and *how* it happens that, according to our conscience, it is an absolute duty to benefit others even when the consequences of the performance of that duty may be injurious to ourselves; nor has any member of that school yet shown how we must not and are not prompted to act otherwise by the same instinct. The result of the present advanced stage of civilization is the identification of individual interests with universal good, and no one can assume that the internal and everlasting power of those absolute, moral ideas which in times of loose passions and irresistible instincts could oppose a law to the unlimited cravings of rebellious natures is not what caused that result to become constituted, as it is at present, an undeniable principle of common-sense.

These and other critical remarks can be made



on the third chapter of the book in question, where Mill founds his doctrine of utility on conscience. The other two chapters of the work contain an analysis of the moral elements of consciousness with the intention to eliminate from it any absolute principle, and reduce all such elements to a conception of utility through a law of association. We shall shortly examine the possibility and value of a method which we might call a method of the resolution and reduction of ethical phenomena, and we will subsequently consider the historical data on which the Positivists rely to explain the genesis and the formation of the moral faculty.

## IX.

ALL ethical and psychological questions in the English school turn on the theory based on the analysis and reduction of internal phenomena. Although the earliest traces of that theory are found in Locke and Hume, it was first outlined by Hartley, and subsequently brought into clearer relief by some philoso-

phers at the beginning of the present century. It is in our times, however, that the human mind, mature with scientific observation, indulges in a more universal and deeper study of method. The two directions of thought manifested by Galileo and Descartes led to one end by different ways during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is plainly seen that, by those methods, a synthetic philosophy has gradually been created in which the modern mind appears to be steadily and almost painfully absorbed. Philosophy assumed the character of psychology in Locke's *Essay*, and philosophers at that time had full knowledge of the inductive process and of the expediency of analysis, at least in so far as they applied it in the examination of the human understanding, as it clearly appears from some of the works of Leibnitz. Philosophy, however, failed to realize its relationship with other methods of thinking until the Scotch, Kant, Biran and Galluppi gave an impulse to philosophical inquiry showing that the problem of the laws governing facts is one and the same both in the science of mind

and that of bodies. This is the reason why in England, where, since Bacon, the inductive method had been more fully adopted in all the departments of knowledge, Hartley so soon anticipated the theory which would identify physiology with inner experience. It is also the reason why Auguste Comte's views did not seem so novel to the English mind, and easily found a place in certain unbroken traditions of method. A proof of this is the theory of association which was vaguely stated a few years before the dawn of the Positive philosophy, a theory which was not altogether new when Hartley first presented it in a somewhat definite form. Such a doctrine implied simply the presumption that the working of the mind is analogous to the process of molecular aggregation and disintegration, and was made the substratum of psychology as soon as the mere possibility of reducing all internal facts to one law received a certain methodical value through the direction of modern scientific thought.

*The Analysis of the Phenomena of Human Mind*, by James Mill, however imperfect

it may be in certain particulars, is of great historical value, marking the stage at which psychology appears to have first assumed the character of natural science. In the preface to the edition of that work, published under the editorship of his son, John S. Mill, the method followed by the author is referred to the same principles upon which so much progress has been made in physics and in astronomy since Galileo and Newton. In commenting on the Positive doctrines we cannot therefore separate the doctrine which transforms moral facts by means of analysis from the method of which that doctrine is a part. Besides, this method having become common to all, or nearly all, modern psychologists, we cannot avoid looking into it and ascertaining, at least so far as we can, to what degree it is exact, while we will also consider its applications in relation to a general direction of modern science.

In tracing the course of scientific progress since Galileo, we notice that the tendency which has brought the mind to a universal synthesis has been developing for over two

centuries and a half. It first appeared in the old idea of the universe, which has gradually given way to the current conception of a system of things in which prevails the harmony between facts and laws. In the *Dialoghi dei Massimi Sistemi e delle Nuove Scienze*, published in 1638, the blind man of Acetri anticipated views that we now find enunciated by noted scientists like Humboldt, Secchi and Darwin. He foresaw that various movements of thought would be the result of the old studies in physics. The Italian sage who so early anticipated the theory that the innumerable phenomena are reducible to one was, even in that prediction, following a traditional path. The tendency of ancient thought in Eastern and Greek philosophy had been almost exclusively toward the investigation which was one day to bring to light the unity of all forces underlying facts in general. From the *Vedas* down to the atomism of Epicurus we find evidence that the mind began to realize in its own unity a universal law which it identified in turn with the motions of visible forces or matter, or with

ideal and quantitative relations, or with an animating principle of creation and with the phenomena of force and effect. The growth of the mind from presumed to real unity of phenomena, from the design to the origin of nature, is, however, what marks the progress of the science of the day. If everything is relative, and law reigns throughout the universe, the secondary and complex laws must be convertible into the higher and more general laws, and the most complicated facts must further be referred to the constant operation of forces. But what appeared very clear many centuries ago is still the *desideratum* of science. Universal unity is still what modern science strives to prove. So far from denying scientific progress, we recognize the wonderful achievements of science in modern times; but Bacon observes that science, like living organisms, develops, not by a successive growth of parts, but by the contemporaneous and harmonious growth of parts in the germ. Organic law is the unity of the component parts in one type, as the principle of science is the ideal unity which

reproduces in itself the real relations of facts. Now, in the primitive and general idea of a system in the mind of a solitary thinker the whole of a science may sometimes be faintly defined, and it is in this case that there is danger of accepting an imaginary and superficial unity of things—an abstraction, in fact—in place of the real and profound unity which can be proved by facts alone. Such has ever been the history of the development of scientific thought. In any order of knowledge the human mind is apt to forerun conclusions and prematurely draw the final lines of a seemingly well-defined system. This mistake is the effect of the impatience as well as of the genius of man in all ages and places, and all the schools have generally blamed each other for such weakness, without, however, any mutually good result, because we observe that modern schools, not excepting the Positive, have the same unfortunate trait.

Abstract ideas which reduce the concrete to forms implying schematism, generalizations based more on vague relations between facts than on the real unity of phenomena, have

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characterized the early stages of scientific progress. Although so unreliable a result of human imagination is generally nullified as the true positive method is adopted, we are apt to be misled again by our fancy as soon as we substitute hypothesis for real facts, or when we indulge in insufficient analysis and synthesis by disregarding actual facts. Every recent achievement in science seems to strengthen the arguments in favor of the theory of a perfect unity of facts and their laws, while it weakens the position of those who still endeavor to argue in support of old generalizations. It is also noteworthy that a higher and truer conception of the universe is generally the result of scientific inquiry. The theory of the harmony of planetary motions initiated by Ptolemy could not stand because it had been inferred from appearances and *à priori* conceptions alone. That theory made the universe comparatively insignificant, representing the infinity of space only as an order of planets revolving around a terrestrial center. Copernicus and Galileo discovered an infinity of worlds in



space; but the observant genius that discovered the spots on the sun and on the moon, and observed the phases of Venus, and counted the rings of Saturn, saw that the relation between satellites and their planets is the same relation of motion and gravity as of the planets and the sun. Kepler demonstrated that relationship quantitatively, and Newton verified it by the law of universal gravitation. All these discoveries were the result of the method of Galileo, who applied the mathematical calculation of facts to the laws of elementary motive forces. And while Descartes, departing from that method, reduced the harmony of creation to empty geometrical formulas, the true conception of *inertia* which the Italian scientist substituted for the theory of peripatetic motion, his experiments on liquids and sounding bodies and on the forces of cohesion and affinity were leading the mind to a field of productive analogies between terrestrial and celestial dynamics. The entire system of the universe is at present regarded as moving around one center. The hypothesis of a

universal impulse, and the other hypothesis of an imponderable fluid as a common medium of vibration, induce the mind to conceive light, heat, electricity—any form of physical force—as modes of motion. Chemistry, applied to the science of bodies and to industry, investigates the combinations and changes of matter and the modifications of the waves of light and heat in various substances, so that it penetrates ever more deeply into the essential structure of bodies; while by the spectrum analysis it discovers the analogies between simple colors and terrestrial and celestial substances, and exposes the universal benefits of light upon life. The matter filling space is thus brought within the grasp of one force which closer investigation reveals as connecting the phenomena of the three orders of nature. The influx of light and heat on vegetable life, the influence of climate on the species and habits of animals and also on their origin and modifications, are facts affording evidence of the essential connection between the organic and inorganic world, between geology and anatomy, and lead to

the doctrine which regards life itself as the effect of the uninterrupted development of forms extending from the zoöphite to man.<sup>1</sup>

This concentric movement of thought has been rapid and sweeping. From 1812 to 1835, Cuvier and Bopp founded comparative anatomy and linguistics. There was, from the first, in both of these sciences a certain combination by which complex forms could be reduced one by one into the simplest. The complicated and connected systems and tissues of animals of the higher order are found to be included in one type of the lower order. Forms of speech which formerly could not be reduced, and which the student would connect in his mind only by means of terminations and tables, are now traced back to their origin, which is in turn referred to elementary phonetic laws. As Cuvier, in endeavoring to find a process of succession in the

<sup>1</sup> *Dell' Unità delle Forze Fisiche*, Preface and Conclusion, by Padre Secchi. Galilèè, *Les Droits de la Science et la Methode des Science Physiques*, chaps. xiii et xiv, par Henry Martin: Paris, Didier. *Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature*, Introductory, by Prof. Huxley.

forms of living animals, was induced to extend his observations to the growth of life through past ages, and built on a few unknown fragments of animal remains a theory that has led to another theory, which is fast becoming popular, so philologists have found an historical order in the development of language from the monosyllable to the flexion; a superaddition of the more recent forms of speech to the older forms in languages of the same family, articulations which, like spoils of thought, are strewn through languages, are regarded by philologists as a series of strata in which human consciousness, aided by psychology and history, will some day fully recognize itself.

Meanwhile, the great movement initiated by Vico, in the studies of antiquity, still continues. The natural science of races and of their tongues, combined with literary and archæological researches, gradually raises the veil of mystery which hangs over the origin of human phenomena. As the geologist observes in the open country the primitive formation of an antediluvian ground, or a relic of the stone age, so the

historian is referred back to the primitive forms of human society and to the earliest ideas of religion through the diligent study of a radicle monosyllable or even a myth. These are for him the first strata, as it were, to which through long ages have been superadded the legends, mythologies and tales—in fact, any tradition preceding the age of civilization. We thus see that nations grow from primitive germs and follow a course of development which we find marked by a series of ideas and beliefs never wholly lost, but partly preserved in traditions and partly transformed in the consciousness of the multitude of the present.

## X.

THIS great analytical movement leading to a universal synthesis has laid the foundations for a new science of the mind. As soon as scientists became conscious of the continuity of phenomena they no longer observed them as the solitary and personal forms of Greek and Eastern mythologies; nor did they lose sight of phenomena

in the haze of abstraction. Phenomena were then regarded as truly concrete and palpable facts in which thought held the harmony of invariable laws; they were regarded as a succession, as a history. The principle of *progress* was gradually conceived to pervade nature until we see the idea of *development* ruling the current conception of the universe. As soon as it was observed that in the inferior order of things there is a *before* and an *after*, a superaddition of activity to existence, it was inevitable that the whole being of mind should also be conceived to be under the influence of one universal law; and mental progress, as shown in history, was accordingly accepted as the external indication of an essential motive force, a work of the mind transformed in itself. The basis of interior observation was thus changed. The multitude of fixed faculties of which, according to the analytical psychology of the Middle Ages, the mind was composed, the innate forms of the Cartesian philosophy and the mechanism of the Sensualists were to be succeeded by a more profound, a dynamically truer idea of inward life. Many

obstacles were to be surmounted, however, before so great a reform could take place in the mode of thinking. In England a partial and empirical analysis, in Germany an excessive synthesis and *reduction*. It is certain that Locke and Hume did not conclusively demonstrate *à priori* principles and forms, for the essential elements of the understanding were lost sight of in their hasty analysis. But Kant's finer criticism of those incomplete studies had certain good results to which we may hereafter refer. The celebrated work, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, marks the extreme point at which analysis had been carried in the history of philosophy. In that work was reproduced, under another form, that tendency to close observation which in past ages had preceded the theories of modern physics. The theory of *reduction* begins after Kant and ends splendidly with the Hegelian idea of absolute thought. It is therefore with truth that Rosenkranz saw in Kant the *revolution* and in Hegel the *empire* of modern philosophy.

German idealism attempted a reduction

which astonished Europe and the world; but it made the mistake of generalizing carelessly, and of mixing concrete facts with the *à priori*. It is true that it originated in a more complete analysis than those of Locke and Hume, but the solitude in which Cartesian thought had laid for many centuries seemed to become in Kant an interminable region in which Fichte, Schelling and Hegel thought they saw a mirage of both nature and mind. Although some wonderful analyses were the results of German criticism, its method cannot be said to have been strictly analytical: so that it could not ultimately avoid the extreme consequences of its principles. It was reasoning in a circle beginning with the categories as the forms of all known things, and ending by finding itself identical with the most abstract foundations of thought. The way to a general reduction was now open; and the doctrine of universal development, drawing the mind nearer to the idea of will, likewise universal, caused Schopenhauer to believe that the inner energy of things could also be reduced to the principle of that



doctrine. In the light of so many experiments it was natural that the scientific mind should try to penetrate further. But the long train of *à priori* deductions discouraged the boldest thinkers; and the human mind, wearied with its own futile attempts to identify itself with nature, accepted external and internal—physical and psychical—forces as a continuous transformation of matter. If Büchner and Moleschott ever have any value in the history of philosophy it will be just because the unscientific haste of their materialism expresses the last, but necessary, result of a method which could be said to be a great error of analysis which led to a gigantic excess of synthesis. While some modern critics refute the conception of force and cause as being irreducible to the reality of feeling, and recognize in force a self-expressing and organizing matter, they give to matter an idea, an inherent energy, by which it is disposed and coördinated into living organisms.<sup>1</sup> They do not seem to per-

<sup>1</sup> *Lucrezio*, chap. i, page 11, by G. Trezza.

ceive that by this forced scientific explanation the *unknown* re-appears just in the direction where they attempted to explain it. These ideas of matter are neither Platonic nor Aristotelian forms, nor even the forces implied in the dynamism of Leibnitz. They appear more like the dispersed fragments of a ruined speculative fabric than the evidences of a new philosophical edifice. There may be a powerful mind that will yet put those fragments into a comprehensible form, but for the present we only observe that between a new learned eclecticism declaiming against all philosophy, and a system of facts and ideas, preference is to be given to carefully considered particulars and to the loftiness of grand speculations; for we are persuaded that on facts alone, strongly connected with ideas by a broad range of thought, experience can properly be made the ground of a doctrine, and science transformed into philosophy.

One of the methods on which this transformation has been attempted is that of the English school, which follows a philosophical

path lying between the excessive *reduction* of Idealism and the doctrines of Materialism, with a reservation which denotes neither poverty nor weariness of mind, but extreme respect and regard for truth. We have before had occasion to note how John S. Mill and Alexander Bain, although negative on some points of the question, do not altogether deviate from tradition. The former preserves in his doctrine a vestige of the theory of liberty and responsibility; and both give value to the analysis of internal facts; while their doctrine of the moral standard does not admit disinterested feelings as original facts. It is indeed very creditable to the English school to pursue the study of so deep a question with a sense of caution characteristic of their nation. It shows that English philosophers realize that the essential condition of true scientific progress lies in not allowing the consequences to take them beyond the premises of their system, and in an unanimous confession of the weak points of their own doctrines, and in never obstinately claiming, as men

( of mere pretense would, that they have said the last word of science.

We do not mean to say that scientific moderation is a rare trait. We all know that among the most illustrious names of men that do honor to experimental research there are those of Liebig, Wagner, Bernard, Tyndall, Agassiz, Quatrefages, Hirn, Bufalini and Puccinotti, who represent opposition to Materialism. Yet, in the present movement of thought in experimental science the English naturalists and psychologists expound more definitely a doctrine which, if well understood, is conducive to what is properly a *dynamism*. We say, if well understood, and we insist on the meaning just on the authority of the founder of the school under consideration, Charles Darwin. A French expositor of the hypothesis of heredity applied to instincts has remarked that a singular literary process characterizes the writings of the great English naturalist. This characteristic is, according to the French critic, that Darwin very seldom openly asserts his doctrines. He is represented by him as

disposing of his facts so as to make his theories proceed from them as an unlooked-for induction still involved in a doubt implying prudence. It seems to us that in this respect the reservations of this eminent man have been misunderstood. Charles Darwin is not a man of letters; he is a scientist, and as such he does not prepare his works to surprise his readers. In most of his productions we notice that he is ever careful to allow facts to speak for themselves; he follows those facts as far as conscientious experience permits. As soon as the facts leave him he halts, no matter where he may be. He who is not ashamed to bow down before the Absolute, before the God of Newton and Galileo, who is enough of a philosopher and poet not to regard the idea of creation as a mark of mental retrogression, saw in the everlasting changes of things one more proof of the essential development underlying which are all the forces combined in that one universal force which the minds of Anaximander and Heraclitus, Aristotle and Bruno caught a glimpse

of, many years ago. In the present state of knowledge, however, he does not feel safe in coming to the conclusion that if force is in matter, then force is matter. He does not conclude that because the transformation of species from the embryo to the ape is physiologically demonstrable, the intellectual and moral qualities of man, his indefinite perfectibility, are of little account in the great question of life.

At any rate, we can affirm that Darwin, Mill, Bain and Spencer, holding in the general harmony of things the harmony of matter with force, of the inert with organism, do not push their analysis so far as to represent that harmony as an absolute identity; nay, Mill and Bain, as we have before noted, expressly make a distinction between the phenomena of consciousness and the phenomena of physiology, and make a particular study of the former. It has been unjustly remarked by some modern critics that, according to the English school of experimental ethics, psychological life is the effect of physiological, and that physiology is

psychology itself.<sup>1</sup> The platonic idea of a close conflict between the soul and the body has long been dismissed on just grounds from the English school. Some of its members, as for instance Herbert Spencer, have sought in the former state of organs the germs of certain hereditary mental states; but we see in these daring exploits of an analytical mind the trait in the Scotch tradition of halting before the problem of the essential nature of facts and of their causes until science enables us to attempt its solution on more certain data. Such data we have not, and may never possess. In such a case the distinction which those philosophers have made between psychology and physiology, between the facts of consciousness and those of the body, will remain, not as a temporary means of method, but as a distinction made for a strictly scientific reason, even if we grant that, in the depth of existence wherein human perception cannot reach, all forces and all

<sup>1</sup>The contradiction of the above assertion is to be found in *Principles of Psychology*, second edition, Part I, page 140, by Herbert Spencer. London, 1870.

phenomena may be the effect of one and the same cause.

## XI.

THE English experimentalists do not, therefore, endeavor to show that physical activity can be reduced to its organs, but that the various forms under which that activity is exhibited are convertible. First, between themselves and then to one common foundation—*feeling*—which, in their acceptance, implies at once sensation, idea, sentiment and will. Association—the element which causes the motion of this matter, as it were, of internal facts—is the law of their connection and distinction under different forms; it is that which, like chemical function in organism, renews life by a process of assimilation and dissimulation. We have pointed out how the psychological observation advocated by Hume, and accepted by the Positive school, caused the latter to see no possibility of any other law in consciousness; and how that mode of observation was applied to disinterested feelings in the progress made



in moral analysis during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The broad range of the inductive doctrines, which attracted English psychologists in the first half of the present century, explains the important influence which the conception implied in those doctrines has exercised ever since on those moral philosophers, as the analogies between the mind and nature have gradually been multiplied and the universal law of life has been revealed, by the analysis and synthesis of acts and motions, as an indefinite development of forms and faculties. The fact that, ever since Hartley, the law of association has been applied to the whole subject of mind by English psychologists proves a slow progress taking place in that school. This progress consists in giving the greatest generality to that law, in making of it a broader ground upon which the theory of the reduction of the various forms of psychical activity will rest without deviating from the intermediate pathway which, as we have previously said, the English speculators on the

question which occupies us seem to follow between Materialism and Absolute Idealism.

It has been said that, in the progress which English psychology makes by the method of association, there is noticeable a growing tendency to doctrines based on the mechanism of life. This assertion is to a great extent untrue. The law of association, as applied successively by various writers, from Hartley to Spencer, does not agree in substance with the so-called mechanical theory of things which, in matters of mind, reduces the facts of consciousness simply to a combination and interchange of elements of sensibility. It is enough to make out the points upon which James Mill differs from those that have written on the subject since his time to see that the two theories essentially differ from each other. The nomenclature of John S. Mill's *Logic*, even crude and stiff as it is, is a modification of the nominalism which so strongly characterizes the *Analysis*, and we see it change finally in Bain and Spencer to a truer idea of the harmony of mind with nature. James Mill, as Ribot

has justly remarked, was more of a logician than a psychologist, so that in his study of the workings of the mind he could not conceive it other than as an empty recipient for impressions which, retained and reproduced as faded and colorless vestiges of the objects which caused them, are what we call ideas. On this narrow basis, originally of Hume, his analysis proceeds. The rich variety of internal facts, in which Kant also saw a succession of original and irreducible acts, implies for James Mill simply the connection and disconnection of elements that enter into sensations and ideas; but none of those phenomena has a physiognomy of its own; they all appear in consciousness and are lost like uniform and monotonous cadences in this one fundamental note: association. Classification, remembrance, imagination, abstraction, reasoning, and will have distinct names; but the passage from one of those acts to another is not pointed out, as it is in Bain, nor is it obviated by a subtlety of analysis, as it is in Spencer. Reducing inward life to a double process of addition and subtrac-

tion, the simplest transfer in thought of a note or sign, one greater or less degree of generality, suffices to cause us to proceed in thought from the sensible of the most concrete nature to the finest idea. The mathematical criterion thus appears to be the sole measure of conscious activity, as it is the measure of that silent, unconscious working of myriads of molecular forces manifest in the changes of the bottom of the deep.<sup>1</sup>

This fundamental mistake in the *Analysis* of James Mill did not escape the critical attention of his son—John Stuart Mill—who alludes to it in a preface to the edition of this work published under his editorship. He says that what there is in the work that seems to need correction arises chiefly from two causes, one of which is the author's impatience of detail. For the rest, to John Stuart Mill

<sup>1</sup> *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, chaps. ii, iv, viii, ix. A new edition, with notes, illustrations and criticisms by Prof. Alexander Bain, A. Findlater and G. Grote; edited, with additional notes, by John S. Mill, 1869.

cannot be attributed an important part in the development of English psychology. Whatever he did in that department is to be attributed to his subtle logical sense by which he seized any point which could in the least contribute to the scientific vigor of a demonstration. He was more the critic of method than the exponent of a doctrine. He gave the outline of a method in his *System of Logic*, referring, as we have before shown, judgment, reasoning, induction, and the ideas of cause and liberty to the law of association. In his *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, he founded a theory of consciousness and perception on the law of association, a theory which was suggested to him, at least in part, by Berkeley. The parts of his criticism which, at first sight, appear to be distinctive traits of his philosophy, are essentially traceable to ideas of James Mill. In both father and son we find the same fastidiousness of ideal objectivity, absolute faith in abstraction and induction, impatience of truly profound analysis: the last of which traits, we may remark by the way, they have in common

with Hume and the Sensualists. The logical, and, it seems to us, almost grammatical formalism which made James Mill's *Analysis* so narrow, is greatly modified in the writings of his son. The inquiry of the phenomena of the mind is less constrained in John S. Mill than in his predecessor; it assumed more breadth in him, under the influence of the Scotch school and the philosophy of Kant, and some of his doctrines, which were originally uncertain and obscure, have been supplemented and elucidated by the more recent doctrines of Bain and Spencer. Even if the explanation of the existence of matter and of *self* as a permanent possibility of sensations and of internal states is not an original theory of John S. Mill's, because the question was thus treated by Hume and Kant, it is the great merit of this philosopher that he appreciated the difficulties of the problem, and expressed doubts that induced scientists to pursue a certain method with more hesitation but with better final results. For instance, in his criticism of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy, after resolv-

ing the mind into a series of feelings, he proceeds thus: "But, groundless as are the extrinsic objections, the theory has intrinsic difficulties which we have not yet set forth, and which it seems to me beyond the power of metaphysical analysis to remove. Besides present feelings, and possibilities of present feelings, there is another class of phenomena to be included in an enumeration of the elements making up our conception of mind. The thread of consciousness which composes the mind's phenomenal life consists, not only in present sensations, but likewise, in part, of memories and expectations. Now, what are these. In themselves, they are present feelings, states of present consciousness, and in that respect not distinguished from sensations. They all, moreover, resemble some given sensations or feelings of which we have previously had experience. But they are attended with the peculiarity that each of them involves a belief in more than its own present existence. A sensation involves only this; but a remembrance of sensation, even if not referred to any par-

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ticular date, involves the suggestion and belief that a sensation, of which it is a copy or representation, actually existed in the past; and an expectation involves the belief, more or less positive, that a sensation or other feeling, to which it directly refers, will exist in the future. Nor can the phenomena involved in these two states of consciousness be adequately expressed without saying that the belief they include is, that I myself formerly had, or that I myself, and no other, shall hereafter have, the sensation remembered or expected. The fact believed is, that the sensations did actually form part of the selfsame series of states, or thread of consciousness, of which the remembrance or expectation of these sensations is the part now present. If, therefore, we speak of the mind as a series of feelings, we are obliged to complete the statement by calling it a series of feelings which is aware of itself as past and future; and we are reduced to the alternative of believing that the mind, or Ego, is something different from any series of feelings, or possibilities of them, or of accepting the para-



dox that something which *ex hypotheses* is but a series of feelings can be aware of itself as a series."

At this point John S. Mill confesses that the question is inexplicable. We would say that it is still more mysterious when, in our inquiry into the most essential conditions of our spiritual existence, we consult consciousness for direct and definite evidence while we doubt its veracity. Another truly great merit of John S. Mill is that he not only doubted himself, but the sufficiency of his method, and recognized those in his country who could discover and make good the flaws in his system. On the publication of Bain's work, *The Senses and the Intellect*, John S. Mill made it the special subject of one of his articles which has lately been republished in one of the volumes of *Dissertations and Discussions*. He justly notes therein that Bain corrects a grave defect of the theory of association; the defect implied in the absolute absence of active and spontaneous elements in the facts of the mind, which was accordingly regarded as

merely the recipient of feelings and ideas; a fault which, as Mill observes, some serious minds, such as Coleridge, had accepted as sufficient ground for dissenting from the doctrine of Hartley. This observation of Mill is right; and, in a historical sense, suggests that John Stuart Mill marks the transition of the doctrines we are considering from the *Analysis* to Bain and Spencer.

Cartesian philosophy, which represented inward life as a series of fixed and innate ideas, was generally unable to perceive the finest differences and analogies of mental facts. It did not seize the transpositions and the intervals of mental facts which harmonize consciousness. Hartley and James Mill, reducing all internal facts to but one fundamental fact, resolved the immense variety of those facts into an indistinct complication implying neither organism nor life. Bain does not substantially dissent from them. On one hand he takes into account the recent discoveries in physiology, a science in which he is very well versed; on the other hand, he makes so deep an introspection

of internal facts as to give his inquiry, as he himself remarks, the character of a natural history of the feelings upon the basis of a uniform method of description. Interior observation appears, therefore, to assume in Bain the characteristics of a truly scientific analysis, revealing each fact of inner life in its place with a physiognomy of its own; whereas, in his predecessors it was lost in minute details or varnished in too general conceptions. *Succession* is, in Bain's theory, the real form of inward life, but it is an animated and living succession involved in consciousness.

One of the most important parts of Bain's first work is the theory of the senses, the appetites and the instincts. The older investigators comprehended the animal facts of spontaneity and of feeling in the too broad a term *Sensation*. The Scotch school and the school of Hartley did not sufficiently observe the alternations and the distinctions of those facts in the economy of the sentient subject. But Bain goes back to a primary element of activity pre-existing passive modifications; and in the in-

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distinct, primitive symptoms of animal life, such as in the random motions of an infant, he apprehends an automatic force involved in the organism; a force which, becoming subsequently involved in consciousness, is that which gives us the primary properties of bodies through muscular sensations. His analysis of such sensations, and his inquiries into the primitive manifestations of instinct and of affective powers, present to us one by one the links of the series implying the almost unconscious life of the infant, as the germs of the long series which culminates in the ideas, reasonings, desires and hopes of the adult. An analysis like this implies such a retrospective examination as we can make of ourselves; it is the gradual development of each element of human life into consciousness. The ruling principle of the work in question appears to have been inherited by Bain from Criticism. It is the principle which supposes in internal facts the reality of *self* and of things simply as a datum of the subjective and phenomenal reality of feeling; and it does not substantially affect the

validity of investigations. We would almost say that psychological investigators would not have shown such subtlety of analysis if they had not realized the need of finding in internal facts alone that vivid sense of the real and of the necessary which Criticism, separating thought from its objects, seemed to make it an impossible task for those investigators to accomplish.

But the consequences of the Positive method are not missing in Bain. The point of difficulty in his psychology, as in any psychological theory, is not the explanation of the transformation from the simplest feelings to the most complex, from the earliest impulses to instinctive motions, but to show in consciousness the point at which one phase of life ends and another begins; the point at which sense and reason, instinct and will make up an harmony involving such profound unity and such vivid and irreconcilable dualities. Bain meets the difficulty, abandoning, as he says, the old theory of faculties. As we are not affected by a single and invariable sensation,

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We become conscious when we realize changes in our mental states, and in these changes relations of difference and argument. We retain impressions which, upon being reproduced, the mind recognizes and classifies according to points of resemblance. The fundamental property of intelligence is therefore *discrimination*, and its law is the opposite between the similar and dissimilar; it implies a law of relativity. *To know* is to perceive in what one thing agrees with or differs from something else. Thus the process of *associating* is included in psychological growth. Reducing the *minimum* of consciousness and of thought to a change resulting in two states different from feeling, with the first transition of one of those states to the other, there begins in us a series in which the differences of *feelings* become connected by a law of continuity, by resemblances and classes. It is a series proceeding, by an arithmetical process, from the least to the greatest differences and resemblances, from the least perceivable and perceived relations between two sensations to the most remote

relations in the world of thought. The quantitative standard is therefore applied by Bain, also; it is, however, much modified and applied on a broader basis in the course of his analyses. His criterion is not, like Mill's, a cold process of addition and subtraction of feelings and ideas; it is a geometry of consciousness which substitutes the intervals and the continuity of feelings for points and lines, and with a few accessible data he gradually forms on those intervals and on the intermediate points between states of consciousness the living series which constitutes the mind.

Alexander Bain endeavored also to explain the active elements implied in mental phenomena; but the subtlety of analysis characteristic of his former work, *The Senses and the Intellect*, is wanting in his *Emotions and Will*. Descriptive precision, which generally marks the works of this distinguished philosopher, is particularly notable in this work in which his inquiry into the facts of inner life proceeds on a thorough knowledge of physiological conditions. Critics of authority have, however,

represented him as being unsuccessful in his endeavors to scientifically classify the facts which he examines, a fault which may, at least in part, be accounted for by the highly involved nature of a point which has heretofore been the least studied in the province of psychology. Even if Bain did not succeed in forming a complete idea of the emotions, and particularly of the esthetic and moral emotions, as involving feelings to express which reason and affection mysteriously concur, he made a real analytical study of the will, considering it in all its successive stages, from its origin, under physiological and instinctive conditions, from the earliest indication of a voluntary power in the exercise of the senses and in the control of affections, to the conflict of motives implied in the process of deliberation. In the first part we have alluded to this most noteworthy work on a subject in the treatment of which Bain was preceded by Biran and Rosmini. It is in this remarkable treatise that the Scotch philosopher treats the question of the development of the will, a subject which, we must admit, has never been suf-



ficiently studied by those of the old school of psychology

Modern psychological inquiry reaches the highest degree of development in Herbert Spencer. He has in common with Bain the faculty of subtly analyzing details, and pursues the strict method of the Scotch school; but he surpasses Bain both by a more delicate sense of scientific organism and by a more profound intuition of relations. In psychology Bain stands to Spencer as in biology Cuvier stands to Darwin. Bain's analysis of the elements of psychical life, like Cuvier's investigations into the phenomena of animal life, discloses a constant succession of the various forms of the phenomena that he investigates. Darwin and Spencer perceive in the forms of the two orders which they respectively study a continuous

<sup>1</sup> *The Emotions and the Will*, completing a Systematic Exposition of the Human Mind; second edition. *On the Study of Character. Mental and Moral Science*, Book III and IV. See also Ribot's *English Psychology* and Spencer's Essay on "Bain on the Emotions and the Will."

transformation, a process of growth and derivation. James Mill represented the facts of the mind as becoming associated on an indistinct foundation of sensation; in John S. Mill and Bain those facts superadd one to the other and distinctly develop in a serial sense. According to Spencer, psychical facts interpenetrate each other, and one derives from the other under the constant efficacy of one universal law; so that to the idea of *succession*, which is the climax of Bain's theory, Spencer adds the bolder idea of an intrinsic *evolution*.

The fundamental traits of Spencer's theory are marked out in his *Essays Scientific, Political and Speculative*. Herein is given a broad exposition of the idea of progress which is the ruling principle of his doctrines. He applies that idea, in successive essays, to the genesis of the world, of society, and of intelligence. The architype of such progress is the succession from the simplest to the most complex stages of growth in the individual organism, by a process of differentiation and of transformation from the homogeneous to the

heterogeneous. He traces this principle of development throughout nature, from the primitive form of the solar system as a nebulous mass, and from the oldest structure of the crust of the globe, through all the successive stages of growth in the vegetable kingdom, to the most recently produced and consequently most complex organism—man. Society, industry, art and science follow an analogous course of evolution, and finally he explains the whole subject of mind by the theory of evolution. As nature, under its many aspects, is not anything finished and stationary, but something ever in process of formation, involving the unfolding of new and various forms from elementary germs, so mental life, which, like physical life, is a species of which life, properly so called, is the genus, does not result from a complexity of distinct forces superadded to each other, but implies a slow, gradual, and often imperceptible, unfolding, through one and the same activity.<sup>1</sup> The harmony between these

<sup>1</sup>Though we commonly regard mental and bodily life as distinct, it needs only to ascend somewhat

two parallel series implies also their law. In the inferior orders of nature there is continuity between the grades of being and of life so that the transformations in those orders are generally insensible and unknown to us; but between one form and another there are proportions of more or less direct correspondence with external circumstances, and that correspondence, originally simple and elementary,

above the ordinary point of view to see that they are but subdivisions of life in general, and that no line of demarcation can be drawn between them otherwise than arbitrarily. Doubtless, to those who persist, after the popular fashion, in contemplating only the extreme forms of the two, this assertion will appear incredible. . . . It is not more certain that from the simple reflexion by which the infant sucks, up to the elaborate reasonings of the adult man, the progress is by daily infinitesimal steps, than it is certain that between the automatic actions of the lowest creatures, and the highest conscious actions of the human race, a series of actions displayed by the various tribes of the animal kingdom may be so placed as to render it impossible to say of any step, Here intelligence begins."—Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Psychology*.

gradually becomes broader and more complex. Thus in every living thing, from the lowest form of life, confined to a tissue, to the most perfect organism, is reproduced the nature of its medium and of the conditions under which the organism develops.

This universal law of life culminates in mind. From its root in organic life, mental activity develops into the most abstract forms of thought; but between these two extremes there is a continuity of intermediate states in which the correspondence of internal with external relations—the correspondence of mental with material life—extends to time and space, to the particular and to the general, and by the coördination of the different elements implied in that correspondence is produced the integration of the originally separate elements. This is a double process which he traces in all the successive stages of growth, from the earliest and rudest mental state in which man moves hardly a few yards from his hut, and is unable to foresee astronomical phenomena by more than one year, to the intellectual con-

dition in which eclipses are foretold and the parallax of stars measured to a most wonderful degree of precision ; from the zoöphite, in which sight is but a dim glimmer, to the adult man who seizes the most minute differences of color and form, and perceives, in the twinkling of an eye, resistance and weight in the very idea of an object.<sup>1</sup>

According to this law of continuity, there are no such distinctions of faculties as it was thought by the old psychologists ; nor can a distinct line of demarcation be drawn between physiological and psychical facts. He does not, however, prejudge the question, and, without looking into the essence of things, he endeavors to perceive in the ever-changing and ascending course of internal phenomena the characteristic features of the gradual transformations from the lowest to the highest, from the simplest to the most complex phenomena. He at first observed the development of psychical life in a more

<sup>1</sup> *The Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I., pp. 1, 2, and especially 3 ; General Synthesis. London : Williams & Norgate.

general and objective aspect, but now he undertakes to consider the various phases of psychical development as they are manifested in the world of consciousness. Although there is not, in Herbert Spencer's opinion, a real interval between physical and mental life, he says that "the two great classes of vital phenomena which physiology and psychology respectively embrace are broadly distinguished in this: that while the one class includes both simultaneous and successive changes, the other includes successive changes only. While the phenomena forming the subject-matter of physiology exhibit themselves in an immense number of different series bound up together, those forming the subject-matter of psychology exhibit themselves as but a single series." But he further says that "the vital actions which are the object of psychology, though they are distinguished from all others by their tendency to take the form of a simple series, never attain this form in an absolute manner;" so that in the first manifestation of psychical life, as, for instance, among mollusca, the vital phe-

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nomena are rather simultaneous and dispersed; and it is only in the decrease of the simultaneous form in proportion to the coördination of various successive impressions in organic centers, which gradually become perfect, that the characteristic condition of *intelligence* is found. The law of intelligence, as the law of all the earlier manifestations of life, is a harmony of internal with external relations—an accord between mind and nature. To quote his own words: "The law of intelligence, therefore, is that the strength of the tendency which the antecedent of any psychical change has, to be followed by its consequent, is proportionate to the persistency of the union between the external things they symbolize." Then, thought reflects the varied and infinite multiplicity of its objective relations according to the more or less constant and necessary harmony of external phenomena. Intelligence is thus examined in the successive phases of its development; from *reflex action* it ascends insensibly to *instinct*, from which it diverges into cognitive



manifestations—*memory* and *reason*—and into affective powers—*sentiment* and *will*.

At this point, more than anywhere else in his exposition, the natural method of Spencer contrasts sharply with speculative psychology. The passage from reflex action to instinct and to reason, from its lowest degree to the highest, cannot be explained at all by the doctrine of innate dispositions and forms of thought, but by the successive aggregation of sensitive elements in experience. The sensations that we experience in the contemplation of a beautiful landscape imply, also, the minor groups of the internal states that have been produced in the country rambles of our younger days; they are, as it were, the echo of the sensations which man experienced in former times; probably they are the modified combinations of states that were organized in the race during its barbarous life in fields and woods. Hence, Spencer repudiates the theories of both Locke and Kant, and gives the latter a physiological significance. There goes on in the nervous system a gradual accumulation of sensitive

modifications which, being organized and transmitted by the law of heredity, become the material element of sentiments and of every complex idea.<sup>1</sup>

The facts of intelligence are thus referred to association. If life is but the continued multiplication of relations and differentiations, the mind must reflect in itself, as in a central light, the infinite rays converging to it from nature; and even the most refined features of spiritual life must result from the aggregations of numerous elementary facts around various centers. This is true to a great extent, and Spencer proves it in his beautiful analysis of love. It appears, therefore, that the mechanical doctrine, modified by the idea of progress, is implied in the views of this English philosopher. He regards mind as the most essential and central part of the system of things which we call Universe, and by a bold synthesis he seems to show the conjunctions and the component parts of mind

<sup>1</sup> *The Principles of Psychology*, Sec. Ed., Vol. I, Part IV, Special Synthesis, chap. v. For what follows see first edition.

and how those parts are adapted to each other.

The organism of his method is so complete that in pursuing it Spencer gives what we would call a mathematical proof of his doctrine. In the General and Special Synthesis, which fills nearly the whole of the first volume of his *Principles of Psychology*, he follows the principle of development from the lowest to the highest forms of psychical life; and in the Analysis, following an opposite course, he resolves the most complex phenomena of the world of thought into cases of one and the same law, consisting of two fundamental processes—verification and differentiation—the collection of analogies and contrasts; one is implied in the assimilation of impressions and the other in their dissimilation. These processes Spencer discovers by analyzing the various degrees of intellectual action, from the most complex forms of reasoning, through all the intermediate phases of intelligence, down to perception. He solves one by one the elements of our knowledge, and after analyzing the most complicated perceptions he passes, from the analysis of the percep-

tion of the properties of extended objects, to the analysis of the perception of space and time, which are, respectively, the receptacle and the condition of those objects, and leads us finally to the simplest data of experience, to the ultimate material element of external perception—*resistance*.

This point marks the *ne plus ultra* of Spencer's inquiry into the phenomena of the spiritual world. The primary element of perception consists in seizing the relations of sensations and of internal states. Perception, therefore, is traced backward in its evolution until the ultimate end of it is found to be hidden in a mysterious extremity remote from mind, into which the light of consciousness barely penetrates, and this mystery, this impenetrable region, Spencer, like Bain, acknowledges to involve the transition from one order of phenomena to the other. But the process of internal modifications does not by itself initiate thought. Modifications would take place in us as disintegrated units, or would disappear like images from a mirror, without leaving any impression, if *mind*

did not seize in our states of consciousness resemblances and differences so as to classify consequents and antecedents and integrate them into each other. The alternation of the similar and the dissimilar is therefore the essential condition of life and of progress in the world of thought, as it is in nature, and this condition, besides being traceable in the most refined forms of mental development, is also found to be the same in bodily life, in which the salutary balance of organic life consists in the modification of every tissue by the action of oxygen, and in every tissue integrating the nutritive elements of the blood.

Such is in outline the psychology of Herbert Spencer. The idea that rules it is that of a harmony of things which extends by degrees from one form of life to another and culminates in mind. It is not an original idea, but it acquires particular aspects when thus treated according to the Positive method; and in the intermediate path which Spencer pursues, between popular empiricism and *à priori* speculations, the conception of an evolutionary pro-

cess certainly assumes an original character. Spencer has been led into this course by his closely inductive genius. He is opposed to too abstract generalizations, and likes generalizations to imply carefully observed facts; but by a bold synthesis he surpasses all that his predecessors have achieved by analysis only. This equilibrium of faculties makes Spencer worthy of being considered in more aspects than one. He marks in the history of psychological inquiry the latest stage that the inductive method has attained in England by the work of a powerful mind impressed with the refinements of modern science; and this is not less true although some traits, and particularly a certain metaphysical touch in the works of this most distinguished philosopher, remind us of Schelling and Hegel. The tendency of the method of the English school, as it is applied by Spencer, seems to become ever more distinct from the general tendency of psychological studies on the Continent, and marks in him the climax of the course of thought exhibited, in successive phases, by James Mill,

John S. Mill, and Alexander Bain. It is a movement of thought implying the tendency to find the basis of mental science in the knowledge of concrete facts, and the progress of that tendency we can estimate by the successive advances made in psychological analysis by Hartley, James Mill, Bain and Spencer. The inquiry into the facts of the world of consciousness, as we have indicated, had no definiteness in the vague mechanism of Hartley and James Mill; it was more logical in John Stuart Mill, more minute in Bain, and is to-day broader and more comprehensive in Spencer, who is the one so far that has brought the theory of the reduction of psychological facts to the finest point. But with respect to the substance of method and details of analysis he has, in common with Mill and Bain—in fact with all the school—that which constitutes the organism of English psychology and gives it a physiognomy of its own in contemporary history.

## XII.

THE organism of English psychology is like the organism of a science which deals with the facts of consciousness as subjective phenomena, and human acts and languages as objective facts, excluding from its province all questions of causes, of subjects and of forces as questions essentially of philosophy. More careful, or perhaps bolder than the Scotch school, which admitted original differences between internal facts, Positive psychology bases its analyses on sensation, regarding it as a primary and irreducible fact; and on association, as one of the most general laws of the phenomena of the mind. Actual sensations or groups of sensations, ideas reproduced and associated in judgments, in universal propositions and in general reasonings are, according to the teachers of this school, the *material* and *form* of an unbroken series extending through the world of consciousness, from one first modification of an internal state to the highest operations of the mind, to science and history. It can hardly



be said, therefore, that experimental psychology as we see it progress in England implies merely a certain direction of the Positive method. The scope of that science is beyond the limits of observation and analysis, as it sets out with one fact to which it reduces all others which we know by immediate experience to be distinct from that one fact which the new psychology takes up as fundamental; and while it repudiates further problems on the nature of phenomena, gives its opinion on the most highly involved question of psychology in enunciating that all internal facts are identical to sensation. This is further proof of what we have before noticed respecting Positive psychology. It contradicts the urgent need of science in rejecting speculations, but sooner or later it is obliged to deal with the very problems which it excludes from its principles.

### XIII.

WE have endeavored to give an outline of the method of English psychology, not so much with a view to present it as a method, as to

trace through its unbroken tradition the general features of the analyses by which that method has been gradually applied to moral questions. We are not aware that Utilitarianism has been criticised in this way before. Not even in England has the subject been dealt with from this standpoint. All, or nearly all, the criticism of English writers on Utilitarianism, including the latest by Grote, imply simply an examination of the ethical and metaphysical aspect of the Utilitarian theory. It is an obvious rule of logic that a theory which is even partially new should be subjected to a new mode of criticism. It is true that Utilitarianism, as taught by Mill, is at bottom old; but it assumes a new aspect as the theory of association is so developed as to form a new basis for it, and turns the analysis of disinterested acts and of moral ideas into a question of fact. In order to judge the Utilitarian doctrine thus modified, it is necessary, therefore, to assume the very standpoint of its best expounders, and find out how far the rigorous principles

of the experimental method are consistent with the theory of the reduction of internal facts.

Only three of the principal writers on experimental English psychology have applied *ex professo* the method of *reduction* to the doctrine of the moral end. James Mill applied that method in his *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*; Alexander Bain, in his works, *The Emotions and the Will*, and in *Mental and Moral Science*; John S. Mill applied *reduction* in the fourth chapter of his *Essay on Utilitarianism*, now contained in the third volume of *Dissertations and Discussions*. These writers substantially agree in recognizing moral ideas and disinterested sentiments, and on reducing them to the utilitarian and sympathetic tendencies of human nature. Each of them has, however, his distinctive trait according as he recognizes a more or less important part which those tendencies play in the complicated phenomena of human conduct, and according as he derives the idea of right from the more or less direct influence of positive law on consciousness. We will consider

especially John Stuart Mill, who first treated the subject with acumen and originality, not forgetting that psychological analysis is the hinge of his Utilitarianism.

The first point which Mill endeavors to explain is: of what sort of proof the principle of utility is susceptible. He says that, like all the principles and first premises of our knowledge, the first principles of human conduct are incapable of proof. Both classes of principles may be the subject of a direct appeal to our internal consciousness. Whatever question may be raised on the end of life it must be a question of what is desirable. To quote his own words: "Questions about ends are, in other words, questions of what things are desirable." According to him, happiness, nothing but happiness, is desirable as an end; other things may be desirable, but only as means to that end. Now, what shows that we should desire happiness? It is shown by one simple argument—the fact that we all desire it.

But Mill saw very well that such an argument was not conclusive. Happiness is

one of the ends to which our conduct tends; but it is not the sole end of life. Besides many other things, man desires virtue, to which he sometimes aspires with open and generous intentions, regardless of other seemingly greater benefits that would accrue to him from a different course of conduct; and often he aspires to it at the risk of what he possesses and even at the risk of his life. A Utilitarian of fifty years ago would have denied such an instance, but Mill does not; nay, he accepts it and tries to explain it by the theory of association. Whatever may be the opinion of a Utilitarian on the original and primary conditions by which virtue is made virtue, he not only recognizes and admits that it is possible that virtue may be desirable as a good in itself, irrespective of any other end beyond it, but he goes further, and finds the real factors of general utility and happiness in this very absolute and disinterested love of virtue. Nor does he think that he thus departs from the principle of Utilitarianism. The desire of an end gradually changes, by the law of association, so that

the means to that end are subsequently desired, sometimes even independently of the end. Now, if happiness is the end desirable, and happiness includes virtue as one of its many and varied factors, it follows that the desire of happiness implies virtue as one of its elements. Virtue is not originally and naturally part of the end; it becomes so by being transformed into a means to attain to virtue; and, even if it seems to be desirable as an end itself, it is desired either because it is pleasant to be conscious of our own virtue, or because it is painful to feel that we are without it, or for both reasons at once. If this fact is psychologically true, if human nature originally desires nothing beyond happiness and pleasure, it follows that happiness and pleasure must be the only desirable things, the only end of our actions, the criterion of morality.<sup>1</sup>

Mill thus reasons in a circle, and recurs to the testimony of consciousness for an evidence of his assertion. He says: "Self-conscious-

<sup>1</sup> *Utilitarianism*, chap. iv, by J. S. Mill.

ness....impartially consulted, will declare that desiring a thing and finding it pleasant, aversion to it and thinking of it as painful, are phenomena entirely inseparable, or, rather, two parts of the same....psychological fact;.... that to desire anything, except in proportion as the idea of it is pleasant, is a physical and metaphysical impossibility."

No one can contradict, in Mill's opinion, this fact; "and the objection made will be, not that desire can possibly be directed to anything ultimately except pleasure and exemption from pain, but that the will is a different thing from desire." The English philosopher has so far dealt mainly with *desire*, and not with *will*. He describes the unconscious inclination of man to happiness like the flowing of a tranquil stream on a beautiful Spring day. He does not point to the strong and conscious rising of the moral sentiment in man against the tempest of instincts and senses. Now, the will is not identical with desire; the one is distinguished from the other in that the pleasure of the thing desired is not always implied in the sound deter-

mination of the virtuous, who often persists in following what he considers the right path in spite of much pain which he may experience in pursuing it; whereas he would certainly avoid the path in the pursuit of which he finds pain, if his motives were at bottom so selfish as the Utilitarian doctrine claims to show. Will, the active phenomenon, is a different thing from desire, the state of passive sensibility, and though originally an offshoot from it, may in time take root and detach itself from the parent stock; so much so, that in the case of an habitual purpose, instead of willing the thing because we desire it, we often desire it because we will.

This is the point in his analysis where Mill attempts *reduction*. The fact of volition is so manifest in ourselves that it can be recognized among a myriad of other facts, because no sooner does it originate than we realize in it the guidance of an immutable idea. It is a fact no element of which can be denied without denying all the elements involved in it; and when it is fully developed in conscious-



ness it is in contradiction, as Mill himself alleges, to all the sympathies and inclinations arising from the senses. Mill, however, regards that fact only as the last link of a long chain of internal facts the ends of which, although apparently diverging into opposite directions, become unconsciously, and by occult ways, reunited in the mind. They become separated by habit and united again by association. Many indifferent things which men originally did from some motive they continue to do from habit. Sometimes this is done unconsciously, the consciousness coming only after the action; at other times with conscious volition which has become habitual and is put in operation by the force of habit, in opposition perhaps to deliberate preference, as often happens with those who have contracted habits of vicious or hurtful indulgence....and last comes the case in which the habitual act of will in the individual instance is not in contradiction to the general intention prevailing at other times, but is in fulfilment of it; as in the case of a person of confirmed virtue and of all who deliberately

and consistently pursue a determinate end. The distinction between will and desire, thus understood, is an authentic and highly important psychological fact. . . . It is not less true that will, in the beginning, is entirely produced by desire. . . . He further says that "him in whom virtuous will is still feeble, conquerable by temptation, and not fully to be relied on," can be strengthened "only by making the person *desire* virtue. . . . by associating the doing right with pleasure, or the doing wrong with pain." Mill concludes that: "Will is the child of desire, and passes out of the dominion of its parent only to come under that of habit. That which is the result of habit affords no presumption of being intrinsically good. . . . Both in feeling and conduct, habit is the only thing which imparts certainty, . . . this state of the will is a means to good, not intrinsically good."<sup>1</sup>

What is the result of Mill's reduction? Like all contemporaneous psychologists, he fully recognizes the fact of the existence of moral

<sup>1</sup> *Utilitarianism*, chapter iv, by J. S. Mill.

ideas; but while he conceives, in the will of the adult, elements altogether new and distinct from those of the desire which initiated that will, Mill regards both will and desire as one and the same fact, the *material* of which is the instinctive tendency to pleasure, and the *form* association. In this is really the common trait of the mental analysis of English psychologists. All the doctrines of the English school of psychology suppose two very distinct things: the study of facts as facts, and their *reduction*, or *explanation*, *by means of other facts*. These are conditions of truly scientific efficacy in two cases only: (1) The study of the fact must be complete; (2) a law taken as an instrument of reduction must have intrinsically the value of a law, and must explain facts and all that is implied in them. Now, in our exposition of the views of English psychologists we see that they suppose feeling, and the active and passive manifestations thereof, to be the sole and irreducible fact of consciousness and consider association as the only con-

dition under which the higher facts of the mind differ from those of sensation and spontaneity; hence, as the only efficacious means by which the former can be reduced to the latter, and by which the former can be explained by the latter. It is of some use to briefly examine whether such a way of putting and treating the great question of the differences of psychological facts is truly consistent with the principles of the experimental method; or whether, even granting that the doctrine of faculties, as it is admitted now-a-days, is imperfect in various ways, the new theory of association implies an efficacious instrument of reduction, as Mill and his school seem to believe. We shall thus finally decide whether the analyses which they base on that theory are to be accepted. We believe that in confining ourselves to the experimental method, we are following the right course of a rigorous criticism of the doctrines of Positive psychology.

XIV.

It may be well to remind the reader that we do not, in any way, accept as data for our examination the idea of natural or psychical *forces* supposed to exist in themselves, independently of facts; nor do we accept the idea of *powers* or faculties as things distinct from the subject and from the acts resulting therefrom. What we think of such ideas we have expressed in the first part of this work, together with an opinion of their experimental evidence and of the conclusions to which Positive psychologists came in consequence of their rejection of them. Now, we propose to point out that the question whether *force* or *forces* exist or not, whether they are reducible to material conditions or not, is not identical with the question whether all phenomena of matter and of consciousness are not reducible to but one phenomenon, or to a single order of phenomena. The former question, properly understood, has been since the time of Leibnitz a question of metaphysics in the strict sense of the term; and both

the dynamists and materialists, who solve it differently, cannot, strictly speaking, escape being called metaphysicians. The latter is simply a question of experiment on the circumstances and the elements of a fact, circumstances and elements which we, both objectively and subjectively, observe to be in phenomena themselves; and reasoning out their differences we conclude that it is either absolutely or negatively possible to reduce and convert those phenomena between themselves, of course not forgetting, while we make inferences, the actual state of scientific knowledge. Those circumstances and elements must, before all, be clearly defined in order that we may establish the test by which we are to determine whether the differences *observed* in facts are reducible or not.

Any change in nature implies two quite distinct conditions. One is the separation of the component parts of bodies and the motion of those parts from one point in space to another. This is what we would call the *material* and mechanical condition. The other, which we would call the *formal* condition, is not

always manifest to the senses, and involves the *action* underlying the motions of the parts of a body. Any fact, however insignificant, involves the two different modes of being. On one hand, a continuous change of forms, hues and motions; on the other, *something* recently working under the appearance of extension, something simple which eludes our most subtle investigations; a mysterious motion underlying a manifest change. Even the most recent theories which, with the idea of force, repudiate distinct principles of action in physical facts, refer these facts to the operations of a *medium* inaccessible to our senses, to the vibrations of an imponderable fluid. Now, while we consider phenomena under the former condition, under their material or mechanical condition, their mode of existence is ever the same. The endless variety of forms under which we contemplate phenomena implies the subtle processes of aggregation and disaggregation. Each form or motion is a *more* and a *less* in time and space. It would seem, therefore, that the only method by which we can distinguish phenomena

is quantitative. This quantitative criterion, however, would not be on the basis of the constant immutable relations of facts. It is simply the vanishing shadow in our mind of the laws of facts; that which made the Pythagorians conceive of their doctrine of number, and led Democritus to speak of love and hatred. Science is not content with a cognition of the sensible *amount* of things, their external and superficial relations; it endeavors to penetrate deeper and find out the *how* of those relations. It not only investigates material existences, but the *mode* and the *form* of their occurrence in time and space. The visible analogy or difference between the attraction of two molecules and of two heavenly bodies; between the repulsion of two chemical substances and of two electricities of the same pole—is for the scientist a suggestion to look into those facts for the like or unlike *modes of action* of physical forces. These *modes of action* and the possibility of reducing them to a universal phenomenon of matter constitute the great problem in modern physics.



It is a fact that the investigation of the unity of the phenomena of physical forces would not be as productive of scientific results if we should investigate the material instead of the formal conditions of phenomena. It is one and the same problem, growing more difficult of solution as we proceed in our study of nature from the simpler to the more complicated phases of development. From the external properties of objects under which the operations of molecular and gravitative forces secretly progress we pass to the study of another operation, no less intrinsic or varied than the former, in the organic functions of the vegetable and animal orders. In both these stages of growth we find the same mechanical process of aggregation and disaggregation, the same visible transformation; a seemingly aimless transmutation of matter under which are hidden *irreducible formal* differences. We say that they are *irreducible formal* differences on scientific authority. Father Secchi, a very able supporter of the theory of the unity of natural phenomena as enunciated by Grove,

and, what is still more noteworthy of him in our case, an opponent of dynamism, declares, in Book IV of his *Unità delle Forze Fisiche*, where he extends the application of the theory of vibrations to molecular and chemical forces and to gravitation, that not one of the facts of organism can be explained solely by the laws of inorganic matter. "As to their material functions, chemical re-actions and emotions," he says, "organic beings are equally under the sway of physical forces; but this element of activity, though one of the most important, is not the sole element in them. It is necessary to take into account a special action implied obviously in a certain molecular disposition which, once established, allows this action to continue until the materials fit for the performance of life are no longer wanting, and that disposition is preserved intact." He further says "chemical action in plants, under the influence of light and heat, can be imitated by art in our laboratories, and in both cases the results attained are similar; what we cannot reproduce is the *mode of action*."

Now, whether we consider such modes of action by themselves as *formal* conditions of facts, or as facts in themselves; whether we attribute them to originally distinct forces, or in any way we may feel disposed to consider them—we must admit that they are what makes it more difficult for the philosopher to reduce things as he proceeds to investigate from the atom and the cell to reason and will. The analogies which Bain and Spencer, and, before them, Schelling, have sought between organism and mind; the doctrine which discovers time in sensation and thought, together with the other doctrines of nervous waves and of hereditary transmission—whatever truth there may be in them, we may safely assert, have so far proved futile efforts to establish an identity between matter and consciousness, between the vibration of a nerve and an idea, or between the contraction of a muscle and moral deliberation. We do not believe that any experimentalist, whether he admits or not forces distinct from matter, can conscientiously say that the greatest *appreciable* difference in the facts of physical forces

is equal to or less than the difference between an impression and a state of consciousness, between a feeling and an idea, between an idea and a voluntary act; or, whether the differences revealed to interior and exterior observation are, at least in this case, rather intrinsic differences in the mode of operation of one or more causes. These are the differences which he may vainly endeavor to obviate by recurring to the usual analogies between the brains and thought. We say *usual* because if we ponder over the claims urged in behalf of the theory which identifies psychical with organic and material facts, we see that there is nothing in them but a mere hypothesis supposing, from certain explained modes of operation in matter, the possibility of other unexplained modes of action by which life, feeling and mind are produced. While they do not explain any other modes of operation, neither the empiricist nor the materialist can claim to make one thing out of the many phenomena which appear to be the results of essentially different principles of activity; the differences

of those phenomena must therefore be recognized as *formal* and not as *material* differences, hence as *irreducible*.

Those who distinguish mental from physiological facts, and reduce both classes of phenomena to one common source, seem to obviate, at least in part, the abstruse points to which we have just referred. They regard psychical association by itself as something distinct from molecular aggregation and chemical affinity, and they only recognize in it the common condition of internal facts, referring their differences to more or less elements of sensibility superposed on each other. It is true that although in this case the distinction between mind and body is still recognized, the intervals which philosophy at one time conceived between the faculties no longer remains, and the characters which analysis finds in them are no longer *formal*, but *material* conditions of single facts. At this point, however, there may be a fallacy which it is important to discover. In the development of consciousness, from the earliest modifications of sense to thought, there

are unbroken series of changes implying two very different but correlative conditions, such as we determine in the phenomena of matter and organism. One of these we would call *quantitative* and *mechanical*, namely, the process of connection between the antecedents and consequents of those series, and between the series themselves as *unity of composition* in virtue of the unity of the mind with nature. The other we would call *quantitative* or *dynamic*—that is, the distinction of any new element in each series; a new mode of psychical action almost like the diminuendo of voices on one note. There are intervals between the two series corresponding to the links in each series, but the former involve much more profound differences than the latter, so that the difference between the simplest and the most complex of the facts of sensibility is not comparable with the difference between the least general idea and the most complicated sensation. In fact, Bain and Spencer reduce sensations of distance and of form to those of touch and motion by an analysis of the homo-

geneous elements which constitute those sensations; but it is not so easy for them to reduce intelligence to sense. In order to maintain his theory of development, Spencer has recourse to remote analogies and to hypotheses; while Bain admits that with the manifestation of intellect there is called into activity a new energy of the mind, a new act *superposed* upon feeling. In a note to James Mill's Analysis, Bain says: "We may add to the mere fact of pleasure the *cognition* of the state as a state of pleasure, and as belonging to us at the time. This is not the same thing as before. It is something *new superposed* upon the previous consciousness." He further speaks of the division of mental *energies*.

These bold psychologists have not noticed that in reducing materially the different series of facts to one *law of composition* those series are not reduced to one and the same mode of psychical action; nor did they see that, while to explain the transition from a simple to a more complex sensation is enough to show how like elements are gathered therein under

one and the same form of feeling, it is necessary to show how the psychical activities, *formally distinct*, are manifested in conformity to one and the same mechanical law of association, to explain the unfolding of ideas from sensations, of will from appetite.

Such is the result of an erroneous application of method. The connection of various modes of action in nature under one order of external and mechanical conditions requires a different course of treatment from that pursued by the experimentalists for various forms of facts. The sensible universe, which Galileo called the Book of God, speaks to us, under its material form, in as many languages as there are grades of things, from the molecule to organism. The grammatical rules of these tongues are implied in mechanics, in chemistry and in biology; but the more general laws of these various branches of science are equally traceable in the world of thought and of experience. The general distinctive traits of the several sciences are in the particular methods and in the proper application of method in the inquiry of single



mechanical, chemical or animal causes. The same necessity of adopting particular methods in the inquiry of particular causes is still more forcibly realized in the investigations of the phenomena of the inner world, which, as the culmination of one universal system, involves all the modes of operation under one form *sui generis*: namely, unconsciousness.<sup>1</sup>

Association is, then, the form of the mechanical process, both in nature and in the world of thought; and although association, as a most general condition of psychological facts, affords an explanation of the material differences and represents the quantitative or serial unity of those facts, we cannot equally *reduce* on the basis of association their formal and qualitative differences. In the sixth book of his *Logic*, Mill says that the laws of mental facts are some-

<sup>1</sup>See Prof. Siciliani's *Review of Italian Positive Philosophy*. There are in this work some fine observations on the irreducibility of psychical functions and on the English doctrines: Chapters "Organism and Psychological Process," and "Genesis and Psychological Teleology."

times analogous to *mechanical* and sometimes to *chemical* laws. The mode which, in the experience of one or more impressions, calls up an idea, is not like the mere coalition of elements of experience, but is analogous to the law of chemical compounds in which the *form* of the composition differs from the matter or from the component parts. Few will deny, particularly after what Kant has taught, that in the higher ideas the elements of sensibility undergo a complete transformation. If it is so, then can we affirm, with the Positive psychologists, that, by the law of association—that is, by the association of material elements alone—we can adequately explain intelligence? Can we admit with them that in the phenomena of thought there is not a new element, a new form of psychical force superposed upon association? It is true, at any rate, that although the method of the English school explains, to a certain extent, how the elements of sensibility become associated in one idea, as for instance in the idea of distance or of form, it certainly does not explain why and how the form of the

composition of those elements results in something so profoundly and *qualitatively* different.

It cannot be said, therefore, that those who have applied themselves to the inquiry of mental phenomena with a view to establish a true science of the mind have so far realized in association the universal means of scientific process, the principle of true doctrinal organization, which has apparently been their object since Hartley. Nor need they say, as John S. Mill has written in *Auguste Comte and Positivism*, that "that which the law of gravitation is to astronomy, that which the elementary properties of the tissues are to physiology, the law of the association of ideas is to psychology." The law of gravitation is valuable as an instrument of reduction in our inquiries into the phenomena of the heavens, because the fact upon which that law rests represents just the *form* under which we contemplate all the phenomena which it explains, although there are material distinctions in their dynamical being. The law of association has not, as we have seen, the same value in psychology, and to accept it,

as some of the leading philosophers of England do, as the foundation of the science of the whole subject of mind, is to run the risk of drifting, in this nineteenth century of ours, toward the false idea of unity implied in the conception of a scheme of the universe; a theory from which these same investigators have departed, and still endeavor to depart, pursuing the *safe* Positive method. The importance of the principle of association in psychology should be, and has generally been, recognized in philosophy; and although a series of English psychologists have, since Hume, made a broader study of it by close and ingenious observations, the tradition of the old schools implied that principle long before them, under the name of psychological analysis and synthesis. In fact, the doctrine of consciousness in the *Elements* of Galluppi is altogether founded on these two processes.

## XV.

THE consequences of Mill's examination are evident in the doctrine of the good. Mill, like

Bain, explains by the law of association the absolutely disinterested motive which actuates the virtuous; he consequently says that any one originally desires virtue because it is associated in his mind with pleasure and with the reward which he derives from it; but in time he aspires to it without any selfish motive, without thinking of the benefits that may accrue to him from a virtuous life; in fact, he grows to wish for it even mindless of the pains which, under some circumstances, he may experience in following the path of virtue. Man at first considers the means in relation to the end, and he afterward looks upon those very means as the ends of his actions.\* Virtue is at first desirable as a means to pleasure, to utility, to reward, and is subsequently desirable as an end in itself, without any thought of pleasure. It seems, therefore, that, according to his view, the sole circumstance of the change of desire to will in the involved subject of psychology is what causes the difference between the inclination to pleasure and the disinterested motive to practice virtue. In this one circumstance

V.B.

\* But this is a mental defect.  
virtue also that?

association is involved. To that which we at first desire as an end we associate the hope of pleasure, and by the force of habit such association causes us to will, in time, virtue, independently of the idea of pleasure for which we originally desired it. The two factors of mind are, therefore, selfish desire on one hand and disinterested volition on the other. The cause of the various ways in which we identify our minds with an end is to be found, in such a case, in the association in thought of our inclination to the personal enjoyment which we expect to realize from virtue with the volition implied in our pursuit of it. If we desire virtue for the personal benefits which we may derive from it, we may reasonably suppose that we have not, morally speaking, the will to follow it; for, even if we desire virtue disinterestedly, it is only because the habitual association in thought of the idea of virtue with that of a reward causes us to dwell on the former idea without conscientiously looking to the latter. These philosophers fail to notice that, although they explain in this way, to a certain extent, the con-

stancy of volition, in opposition to the variable character of desire, they do not explain how the mind apprehends in those two forms two profoundly different principles of activity. Mill's theory seems to take us only half-way. It is not enough to affirm that the ideal of good is a free purpose which has become necessary, and that we seek pleasure sometimes simply by force of habit, and not because pleasure has any real attraction for us. It remains yet to be proved that such is the case in the question of virtue, and how it happens that the very instinctive inclination which, under the law of self-love, avoids pain, becomes by the mysterious force of habit a contempt for any pleasures and pains in view of a far-off end, while we feel desire, affection and passion impelling us to conquer the force of conscience while we are in a state of mental conflict.

Laying too much stress on the fine analogies discernible in facts, the Positive school loses the sense of the important points of difference which a broader analysis can find in consciousness. They confine themselves to

phenomena, nothing but phenomena, and fail, therefore, to explain them fully; as one who, following by boat the course of a river, cannot perceive its windings so distinctly as he would from the summit of a hill. There are appearances of mind, as there are appearances in external nature; and mere appearances we must admit them to be while we do not penetrate deeply enough to find the occult causes of which they are effects. In the investigation of natural phenomena the inferences made in an earlier stage must be verified by what is discovered in the final general observation of the subject under investigation. In this the method of psychology should not differ from the method of modern natural science, which, not recognizing any sudden revolutions in the whole cosmos, assumes the new phenomena to be the grounds for further investigations and new experimental processes. It observes carefully and explains more than one cause; but, being finally brought face to face with something yet to be known, it patiently goes over the same ground, presuming that this *something*



*more* to be explained may be referable either to absolutely new causes, or to some mode of action which has not yet been foreseen as the effect of some already known causes.

## XVI.

IN the fifth chapter of the work referred to in the preceding pages, Mill concludes on the basis of association his analysis of some phases of moral nature. In a previous chapter he makes a study of the psychological process by which feeling and will become powers in moral life; and in the fifth chapter he examines, one by one, the elements that enter in one supreme idea: the idea of right; endeavoring to show that it does not contain any principle the explanation of which cannot be given on grounds of experience. Up to this stage his inquiry seems to have the character of an anatomical study of disinterested ideas and feelings; and what follows we would call an historical study of the origin and growth of those feelings and ideas in the individual and in so-

ciety. Mill's keen analysis of moral nature originated with Kant, and forms one of the most important features in the contemporaneous system which we consider; and we certainly cannot deny that it proceeds on some sound and good points. The idea of justice, of law and responsibility, has always been, and is still, regarded by Positive psychologists as the culminating result of that psychological process by which man attains to full self-consciousness, and as the highest result of that process they of course look upon it as the most complex fact to be subjected to investigation; in the same way that the most lofty alpine heights, to produce which many geological ages, revolutions of soil and climate have concurred, are the most complex facts to be investigated in one of the orders of nature. The tendency to that climax is at first dimly manifested in the inclinations and sympathies of an infant; it is more marked in the desires and in the first symptoms of volition in a boy, and, growing more decided through the various stages of youth, it reaches its ultimate stage

of development in the consciousness of the adult, who, by mature reflection, establishes an order of moral relations, and takes it as the guidance of his conduct. At this point the idea of right may be said to be formed; but the question upon which speculators have always been divided is whether the idea of right and wrong is taken as the rule of our actions owing to social and sympathetic feelings, on account of education and custom, and it is also one by the solution of which we may finally establish a sound basis for the science of morals.

John S. Mill is one of those philosophers who are confident of the future of mankind, on the ground that moral ideas grow more powerful as man advances through experience and education. This seems to point to some previous remarks of his to the effect that the relations between the individual and society, his individual and social nature, are such as to identify individual with social interests; the interdependence between the two becoming more determined as we advance in civilization; so that the principle of utility ultimately im-

plies moral obligation. About the same thing can be said, according to Mill, with reference to the conception of justice. The conception of right and wrong is nothing intrinsically peculiar; it is not a simple idea and *sui generis* a revelation of an irreducible internal fact. Mill says that analysis finds in it a combination of attributes the investigation of whose origin and form shows how they gather around it a *complex sentiment* by virtue of the law of association which he believes to have been effectually explained. He proceeds to analyze those attributes, and after scrutinizing such acts as we call just and unjust, and showing by an etymological examination that the idea of law, implying something ordained by law, has prevailed at all times in the notion of justice, he observes how there has always been combined with the idea of justice the idea of legal restraint, of penal sanction and of duty; the last implying that it is dutiful to do whatever can justly be exacted from others. The idea of penalty, which is essential to the formation of the idea of law, is, then, a peculiarity by which the idea of

justice is intrinsically distinguished from the principle of utility; but it is also the idea which underlies the notion of good and evil, and, like the conception of moral obligation, is universal. The correlative ideas of duty and of right are really the points which make the notion of justice essentially distinct from other ideas; and whoever does not clearly distinguish the ideas of duty and of right is liable to confound the dictates of the sentiment of justice with the virtues of beneficence and generosity, and thus mistake obligations of justice for moral obligations.<sup>1</sup>

So far Mill's examination does not seem to be open to serious contradictions, provided we grant that in the process of formation of the supreme conception of law, which Mill himself recognizes as the essence of binding force, the notion of penal sanction originally precedes the idea of *absolute right* upon which the law hinges, even in cases in which man feels remorse for faults beyond the reach of earthly sanction.

<sup>1</sup> *Utilitarianism*, chapter v, On the Connection between Justice and Utility.

But this English economist, as usual, makes an attempt to analyze the idea of justice so as to resolve it into the various elements which he conceives to enter into its composition. He says that "the desire to punish a person who has done harm to an individual is a spontaneous outgrowth from two sentiments. . . . the impulse of self-defense, and the feeling of sympathy."

"It is natural to resent," he continues, "and to repel or retaliate, if any harm is done or attempted against ourselves, or against those with whom we may sympathize." . . . Whether it be an instinct, or a result of intelligence, it is, we know, common to all animal nature; for every animal tries to revenge itself on those who have hurt itself or its young. Human beings, on this point, only differ from other animals in two particulars: first, in being capable of sympathizing, not solely with their offspring, or, like some of the more noble animals, with some superior animal who is kind to them, but with all human, and even all sentient, beings; secondly, in having a more developed intelligence, which gives a wider range to the whole of their sent-

iments, whether self-regarding or sympathetic. By virtue of his superior intelligence, even apart from his superior range of sympathy, a human being is capable of apprehending a community of interest between himself and the human society of which he forms a part, so that any conduct which threatens the security of the society generally is threatening to his own, and calls forth his instinct—if instinct it be—of self-defense. The same superiority of intelligence, joined to the power of sympathizing with human beings generally, enables him to attach himself to the collective idea of his tribe, his country, or mankind, in such a manner that any act hurtful to them raises his instinct of sympathy, and urges him to resistance.<sup>1</sup>

The origin of the idea of the Just, which has at all times a bearing on the misfortunes and crimes of mankind, is thus explained by Mill as the result of a kind of moral mechanism in which the individual and society are

<sup>1</sup> *Utilitarianism*, chapter v, On the Connection between Justice and Utility.

the motive-power to selfish or sympathetic instincts, under the regulating influence of intelligence. We shall not refute his doctrine, simply because it appeals to the affective elements and impulses of man. As the poet says, *all is sacred in nature*, and the work in which human faculties actively share cannot have either a hierarchy or means except in relation to an end; this end, and the form which it assumes in moral consciousness, are, however, the points in question in the domain of ethics.

In a previous chapter we have noticed how Mill endeavors to explain the subjective origin of morality in the binding force of inward life without apprehending the law of that force. Our criticism on that point of his moral philosophy applies also to the present instance, in which he claims to find in intelligence the objective basis of moral sanction in general. But, as he previously denied the origin of rational obligation in consciousness, so he here refutes the claim of intelligence to hold absolute sway over the phenomena of moral life.



To say the least, Mill is evidently in an insoluble dilemma. He either admits that the claim of obligation lies solely in the connection between the sympathetic and selfish feelings, in which case the superior intelligence, which he attributes to man as the judge of his relation to his fellow-creatures, plays an accessory and useless part in the moral world, or he recognizes intelligence as a regulating inner power; in which case, we wonder how we are to explain the source of the *absolute necessity* of good and of respect therein implied; a necessity which we cannot draw from self-regarding or sympathetic feelings. Of this necessity, which Mill himself recognizes in moral ideas as a law, man is not clearly nor distinctly conscious. He realizes it through the conflict of passions, instincts and interests; but the process of reflection by which the individual gradually perceives an immutable order in his means and ends, and assumes a sense of duty, whereas he at first felt the influence of the sense and of sympathetic elements alone, is the real *moral moment* of consciousness, the *primitum saliens*

(!!)

of morality. This *moment*, which Mill does not apprehend, was fully realized by the method of psychological analysis pursued by Edmund Kant, who has been recognized by Schopenhauer—one whom it is not easy to praise—as the conqueror of Eudemonism. The estimate of Kant's merits in this particular by Schopenhauer is even more significant when we consider that he afterward charged Kant with basing the science of morals on the Decalogue, whereas we think that if there is a fault in Kant's doctrine, it is just in his supposition of a will that can be absolute law to itself.<sup>1</sup> In the mind of the great philosopher of Königsberg, such autonomy, perhaps, lies in the identity of reason with the infinite, and may imply, in such a case, the moral moment to which we have just alluded. This case seems to afford an occasion to consider, under a very different aspect, the critical question, so long agitated in Germany, concerning the fundamental principles of Kant's system of ethics; a discussion which throws

<sup>1</sup> See *Dei Beiden Grand Probleme der Ethik*, Schopenhauer. Frankfort, 1841.

light on the nature of the disinterested act; for, analysis discovers in that moment of reflection a parallelism between a primal fact of consciousness and a primal idea of obligation, which appear to be inseparable, both logically and experimentally; and besides the notion of the end and of the law, there arises in that moment, as the final result of mature reason, the disinterested volition which Mill denies, in the fourth chapter of his work on *Utilitarianism*, to be implied in our virtuous actions.

Similar considerations would also apply to Mill's idea of *right*, the notion of which, as we pointed out, he conceives to be inseparable from the notions of law and of penalty. That which Mill calls *intensity* of instinct in self-defense, and to which he attributes *absoluteness*, cannot, by itself, cause us to pass in thought from the idea of a mere necessity to the idea of duty—from the *ought* and the *should* to the *must*, from the *Sollen* to the *Pflicht*—without the concurrence of a new element which cannot be so resolved as to be fully explained by the theory of experience alone.

## XVII.

THE origin and nature of moral facts will therefore be inexplicable to science while it does not take into account the intellectual and rational conditions which determine them. The essence of what we mean by morality we can find in the broader range of speculation which we gradually assume by reflection; and if we do not realize that essence since childhood, if self-love and sympathy are impulses of our nobler affections, and are the echo, as it were, of a voice which, later, appeals to us through reason, it is only because of a universal law by which the lower motives are so coördained as to attain to the highest end. We admit, therefore, that in this transition in consciousness, from that which we desire instinctively to that which we rationally will, there is *development* in some sense, but we cannot conscientiously admit that outside of that process of growth there is nothing else—no activity implied in consciousness substantially different from those

forces which are reduced to the various elements with which science deals.

Such is our belief both in reference to individual consciousness, as we have so far investigated, and to collective consciousness as recorded in history. It is known how, according to empirical and contrary doctrines, moral ideas change essentially from age to age, from people to people, and involve simply a process of gradual refinement, from the rude instincts of the savage to the most delicate emotions, under the influence of education and of common interest. Such is in general the theory which Mill, Bain and the Positive school both in England and France support; and it is also the theory expounded in a work which calls for especial consideration in these pages.

*L'uomo e le Scienze Morali* (Man and the Moral Sciences), by Aristide Gabelli, is one of the most notable works that have been produced in behalf of the Positive doctrines in Italy.<sup>1</sup> Rather dissatisfied with the weak efforts

<sup>1</sup>One of the most notable works on Positivism is

of some writers to inculcate views based on an imperfect knowledge of what science may have achieved outside of their own land, this Italian thinker has endeavored not only to give an exposition of Comtism and of the theories of the English school, but to add to both many original and ingenious observations. Feeling combined with reason, and novelty with good sense, impart a peculiar charm to his style, while they betray the thought which inspires the work. Gabelli does not offer an essentially new book to the public. Tired of all systems, and after indulging, as many others have done, in the contemplation of *bare facts*, he believes that we can draw from them, if not principles exactly, at least general ideas which may enable us to establish, if not a science in the strictest sense of the term, something similar to it. We thus notice that the book is substantially the result of a natural disposition of the author. The critical study of *innate, absolute, eternal, inexplicable* truths which, in his

*La psicologia come scienza positiva*, by Roberto Ardigó. Mantova, 1871.

opinion, metaphysicians think they find in consciousness, assumes a broad range in the examination which he makes of *certain primitive tendencies of human nature*, such as self-love, the love of happiness, and the free scope of our actions. In the course of this examination he is led to believe that social and utilitarian impulses are at the bottom of the current ideas of justice and injustice, of good and evil; and he subsequently applies this criticism to the method of moral science, and particularly to ethics and to right. But Gabelli does not propose to confine himself to criticism alone: he says that he wishes to convince, and denies that truth, impartially pursued, destroys good motives and degrades man by *blighting his hopes and destroying his illusions*.

This natural sense of moderation, which is the best merit of his book, seems also to detract from its scientific value. That which Gabelli acutely calls the *probatory force of small things* may hold in so far as we endeavor to find everywhere in facts simple and evident truths, but it does not hold in complicated

questions concerning various and important elements, in cases where the office of criticism is not only to connect facts, but to make them the grounds upon which a system of accurately and strongly connected ideas is to be contradicted. Very few will deny that Gabelli dwells too much on details, and the principles which he deduces from his observations do not possess the force of demonstration at which his criticism aims, with a view to contradict the conclusions of his opponents. For instance, we do not think that his remarks on self-love diminish the evidence upon which we believe in disinterested motives, while he does not prove that a disinterested motive is something impossible in psychology. The accurate proofs which he produces against the doctrine of an excessive and innate liberty are, to say the least, inopportune, at a time when no school admits it and when he himself falls into the inconsistency of recognizing in man a certain self-control.

The criticism of Gabelli is principally upon the historical development of moral conscious-



ness. But whoever recollects the trouble of the speculators on ethics, and knows how often a cry has been raised against the belief in a constant and immutable direction of moral ideas, would be pleased to see a contemporary critic revive the question, recurring to entirely new facts or to broader and more important considerations on history. While in England the question of moral principles is agitated on the results of profound researches, including the researches of physiology, and on both sides the latest results of psychological studies, travels, and investigations in history are produced as evidence, it is painful to hear, in a country like Italy, in the nineteenth century, the repetition of arguments which, since the later part of the last century, have been effectively confuted by the critical philosophy of the Scotch, by Kant and by Cousin.

Although these proofs could have been effectually produced in the times of Locke against the doctrine of innate ideas, they are certainly insufficient now, when moral unity in different historical ages is admitted, not so much, as

Lecky says, as *unity of principle*, but as *unity of tendency*. Gabelli's assertion that the notions of good and evil, of virtue and vice, are the same to all men and to all ages, if interpreted literally, would be an insult to history, when the common doctrine of speculators, admitting an ever-growing influence of intelligence involved in the principles of morality, does not explicitly deny that this constant and immutable tendency of mind varies according to the times and to the continually changing conditions of civilization and customs. We believe that Lecky has demonstrated how many moral ideas, as, for instance, the ideas about usury and abortion, are solely due to the intellectual progress of the times; and how we find, after mature historical studies, that some of the points of difference upon which the positions of the negative schools are taken can be referred to one and the same moral motive. The sentiment of humanity which to-day prompts us to care for the aged, the sick and the poor, is identical with that sentiment which in savage tribes induced the sons to take the

lives of the fathers who were unable to endure the trials and privations of nomad life. The theft of the savage was often the effect of a habit of the common possession of property; and it is generally believed that slavery originated with the Romans and with other nations in the desire to save war prisoners from death. We would like to refer the reader to other beautiful observations by M. Lecky on this subject: especially to the history of chastity, which he gives briefly, and to that of the order in which moral sentiments develop.

We then see how the starting point of Gabelli's criticism is erroneous. He seems to know very little of the school of speculation when he speaks so often of *innate* ideas, of *inspiration* and of *natural sense*; because, although charges like these might have been useful a century ago in France and Germany, in dealing with the remains of Cartesian philosophy and with the doctrine of Wolf, they are useless at a time when we possess the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and when the Scotch and Positive schools, Galluppi and Ros-

mini, have made such use of inner experience as we all know. We will add, also, at a time when, in Germany, France and Italy, Hutcheson and his school of *moral sense* gradually give way to rational ethics: this is the case even in England, where the school which they call *Intuitive* recognizes even more the part which reflection plays in moral phenomena, and Hodgson, in his *Theory of Practice*, calls the doctrine opposed to Utilitarianism the doctrine of *moral law*.

We think that we have shown how the criticism of the Positivists is often based on a false interpretation of the opposite doctrines, and on a pre-judgment denying the legitimate harmony of some principles, to which they are opposed, with certain others. Our conclusion concerning the theory of association is the same in the history of moral ideas. If, in the individual, moral reason unfolds from instinct by a process of *internal development*, without excluding the concurrence in that growth of some irreducible activity, we do not see why the same does not occur in history, and how the

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### *The Theory of the Moral End.*

progressive movement toward moral and scientific truth does not point to a final ideal which we first recognize indistinctly in our senses and sympathies, and finally see in the fullness of its splendor by the light of reason. To such a belief Gabelli himself seems to lead because he admits that, once recognized, moral principles and ideas have an immutable and necessary value, and concedes that man *can* produce them. The course of thought in his book wavers between empiricism and speculation, and is not critical enough to destroy all that he attacks, nor is it *constructive* enough to follow to the end the natural consequences of the truths which continually glimmer before the mind of the author.

### XVIII.

We finally put the question—a question of method to which our critical study leads—whether a true science of morality can be based on the psychological analyses we have so far exposed or on the utilitarian tendencies engendered by self-love, sympathy, and reason. We have seen that Mill, Bain and Gabelli claim

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to believe that such a science can be founded on what their researches bring to light. A careful examination of the results of their investigations seems to show that their efforts to that end are so far ineffectual. The conception of consciousness to which their analytical inquiry into the elements of volition and of the idea of the moral end on the basis of association leads, compels us to substantially deny that we are responsible for our actions. It leads also to the denial of the reflective element, in reducing that element to appetite and desire, while it mistakes the spontaneous *succession* of internal facts for their causal nexus, their *quantitative* for their *formal* differences, and thus apparently prevents the framing of a theory of responsibility and of law in such a sense as we believe we have fully suggested, if not defined, in the course of this discussion.

If the conclusions to which the analysis of the previously referred to eminent thinkers evidently lead are to be accepted, it seems to us that neither the subjective and psychological basis of ethics, nor the objective basis of science,

which implies the immediate relation of consciousness to the absolute, are to be recognized. The notion of the useful, such as is formed from the empirical knowledge of facts and from their generality, cannot by itself define the law of morality; from the  $\delta$ ,  $\tau$  cannot come the  $\delta\iota\acute{o}\tau\iota$ , while in the harmony of ends implied in the term Utility we do not perceive, by the light of reason, a necessary harmony of ends.

That it is impossible to establish a system of true morality on the method of induction is quite effectually shown by some who hold opinions diametrically opposed to the Utilitarian views. Grote, Lecky, Hodgson, and all the speculative school, agree that the doctrine of those who consider *consequences* alone cannot be a sufficient basis for morality proper; and the recognition of this insufficiency may be said to be the prominent point in Anti-Utilitarian criticism. But what is more especially worthy of note in our case is that Herbert Spencer has raised the very same objection against the moral philosophy of the Utilitarians. In a letter to Mill, reproduced in Bain's *Mental and Moral*

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*Science*, the great psychologist declares himself a Utilitarian only in the abstract, and dissents from common Utilitarianism, which he calls empirical. Assuming that the ethical principle, the science of right, must determine *how* and *why* certain modes of life are beneficial and some others harmful, and that such results, not being accidental, must be the necessary consequence of the nature of things, he claims that morality proper deduces its laws from the laws of life and also from the conditions of existence; and recurring to the hypothesis of hereditary transmission, he finds, in the organic and psychological modifications, which are transmitted by consanguinity, the origin of certain feelings and intuitions which do not manifestly originate in individual experience. He then refutes the Utilitarian doctrine which recognizes as the rule of human conduct simply some principles which we deduce from experience; and says that ethics must have an independent basis, in a certain sense, antecedent to the basis which utilitarian experience can give, and, con-

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sequently, a basis antecedent to those sentiments which are supposed to be the results of such experience. Herbert Spencer treats of moral questions in his *Social Statics* and in some of his *Essays*, and expects to treat the subject at length as an appendix to his *Principles of Psychology*. Whatever turn his doctrine may take, it is certain that his mind will reach beyond the limits of induction and experience, and venture once more in the vast field of speculation which the great problem of being offers to the thoughtful. That true science leads, sooner or later, to the consideration of the highest principles will not be denied by the truly scientific; and although we see that many sincere investigators, dazzled by the awful splendor, turn from the contemplation of the highest regions of mind, they cannot but pause and meditate before the unexpected reflections of that solemn light in the depths of organism and of matter itself.



## **PART III.**

### **POSITIVISM AND THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY.**

#### **I.**

IN our examination of Positive morality in relation to the mental philosophy which is governed by the principle of association, we see how the doctrine of Auguste Comte, based on some principles of Locke and Hume, has developed into a system of psychological analysis. When the methodical generalities of the Sage of Montpellier were enunciated, philosophical thought was impoverished under the influence of the materialistic views of those who were without scientific habit, and it could not, therefore, recover vigor from the meditations

of Biran as it could from the spiritual re-action of Collard and Cousin. At a time when, even in France, the ineffectual attempts of German metaphysicians had destroyed faith in metaphysics, students hoped to find in science a solution of the deep questions which had so long perplexed the mind. The method suggested by Comte seemed to point to the path which would lead to the cherished result, and they accordingly gathered encyclopedic information, made of psychology a part of biology, and indulged in vague historical generalities. The analytical tone of the English mind, in contrast with the intuitive character of the German mind, manifested itself in the introspective observation of consciousness, as we see in the works of Shakspeare; and the vast results thus attained, from Hobbes to the most recent members of the Scotch school, throw a light on some of the most obscure aspects of the great question of mind that even the spirit of the narrowest skepticism could never altogether have dimmed. In another country where psychology had a different and weaker tradition

the principles of Hume and Comte would probably have resulted negatively; but, owing to the above referred to traits of the English mind, those very principles fostered the traditional development of analysis in England, and with careful criticism there was preserved in that country a spark of the true philosophical spirit without which German criticism might have completely extinguished speculation throughout Europe.

In the beginning of the present century there were in England certain moral and political conditions particularly favorable to the study of psychology. It is probable that, owing to their geographical position and to the nature of their institutions, the English have not participated in the political disturbances of the continent, and show in their literature and philosophy the character of that calm progress which they seem to make by not deviating too abruptly from a certain traditional course. With the exception of the great revolution of the seventeenth century, moral and political revolutions in England have been more like

evolutions. Long and careful preparations have generally been made for any contemplated changes in the social and political relations, and in this way sudden and profound shocks have been prevented. This characteristic of the English is as evident in their philosophy as in other departments. We have seen how the Scotch school has greatly modified the philosophy which Hobbes based on self-hood, and the careful way in which opposite schools consider the points involved in the method which has been advocated since Bacon. Intellectual conditions like these, combined with public prosperity, which is truly an essential condition of culture and necessary to impartial judgment, caused England to contrast favorably with the rest of Europe. While philosophy, like liberty, reveled in license, there was preserved in the atmosphere of conservatism a certain degree of pure philosophical thought which ultimately gave rise to a general revival of speculation. It can be said, therefore, that, of the four European nations to which modern philosophy seems to belong, England was in the

best condition to cope with the ever-increasing mistrust which troubled the mind on the rise of Positive thought. Both Germany and France, which, since 1789, seemed to play, almost in concert, the most prominent role in the intellectual and political movements in Europe, the one spoiling the results of her own work by weak impulses, and the other often aspiring to an ideal impossible to be realized, were so exhausted in the middle of this century by the labor of fifty years that either country lacked the speculative temperance and civil tranquility necessary to deal properly with a new mode of thought. For the rest, it is known that all the schools from which German philosophy was derived after the fall of Hegelianism have, in common with previous doctrines, a metaphysical tendency — although Schopenhauer and Herbert agree on some points with Positivism, we say *all* these schools, including the school of Büchner and Moleschott, which is intrinsically materialistic. We have also shown that this applies, in a great measure, to Littré and some other French Positiv-

ists. Taine, who is probably the only one among them who has relied much on interior observations in psychology, may be said to belong to the English school whose path he follows.

At this point we wish to observe that the new turn which the influence of Positive ideas gave to philosophy seems to have found in Italy, more than elsewhere, certain favorable conditions of thought. Sensualism and materialism never succeeded in taking deep root in that country, somewhat for the same reason which prevented the bold attempts of liberty and spared the people the infamies which might have been perpetrated in its name, and also on account of the foresight of the princes who granting civil rights seem to have anticipated the wish underlying reckless political movements. In Italy, while the clergy speculated on theological trifles, the traditions of the Renaissance, the school of Galileo and Vico and the early revival of experimental doctrines initiated by Gioza, Genovesi and Galluppi were promising a system of thought that would be



positive in the right sense of the word, without losing the essential traits of philosophy. The traditions of this philosophy we find continued in the works of Rosmini, Gioberti, Mamiani and others. Many who have too much sympathy with foreign doctrines may not recognize the fact of this continued tradition, but history cannot fail to attach due importance to it.

But the influence of those doctrines, so powerful at first, especially in the political world, could not be exerted in some other countries, mainly owing to two causes which forced national thought to deviate from its course. The first of these is the skepticism which, without recognizing in the Italian schools the fact of a new speculation opposed to that of Kant, but claiming to be the latest result of German theories, and to refute in their name any other principles, killed in the very germ all philosophical activity. The other cause to which we have reference is the absolute idealism which, admitting the possibility of metaphysical knowledge, nevertheless compelled the mind to depart from objective investigation in order to

substitute for it that which Schopenhauer, with much cogency, called a *dialectic delirium*. It is well understood that through the intrigues of foreigners, partly under the protection of the Church, and in a land where the conditions favorable to deep thinking could not exist under political bondage, Italian philosophy could not freely develop, and consequently prematurely decayed. Mental activity was the distinguishing trait of a few solitary men at a time when systems should have been succeeded by schools, teachers by practical followers, and mental life invigorated by contact with foreign thought. There could not have been a better opportunity for the Italian philosophers who were then under the influence of Latin traditions, and not subject to attacks of reckless criticism and powerless faith, to reconcile the pretended absolute knowledge of Pantheism with the negations of all scientific truths, than that afforded by the brief stage of mental exhaustion between the decline of the German speculative movement and the succession of the Positive mode of thought. If the philosophical thinkers of

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Italy had shown a mediating and reconciling spirit, it would have been an evidence of their right to the independent national existence which they subsequently assumed. If so much was not accomplished it was because the Italians did not seize their opportunity; probably for the same reason for which they formerly failed to participate in the literary and scientific movement of Europe. The Italian mind was absolutely concentrated on the idea of national unity and independence. The other departments—literature, science, industry, commerce—were not yet national traits. Philosophy, especially as it appears since Kant, constantly engaged in examining principles and methods, and considering the criticism of the past and the future of speculation, cannot fully develop except where true national existence brings the minds in contact with each other and favors the diffusion of knowledge. While life may be entirely intellectual and scientific, as it has been for centuries in some northern countries where the people require much less than the people of the south, with the Latin race, in which the most powerful

bond of the mind and soul is law, if national impulses are to be realized in certain civil relations they must be entirely political. This partially explains why France is the only one of the three Latin nations which found in Cartesianism a true and great philosophy. In France national unity may be said to have been established since Louis XI.

It is a well known fact that for the last thirty years—nay, since the commencement of the present century—the only aim which the Italians have had constantly and earnestly in view is their political re-constitution, and that all the most active forces of the nation have been more or less employed in the great task of attaining to that ideal; so much is this the case that it can be said that during this period Italian literature, art, science, even speculation itself, have been forms or implications of political thought. It is true that philosophy, in so far as it relates to principles and methods, has been preserved in a substantially speculative form, especially by such thinkers as Galluppi, Rosmini and Mamiani; but it can hardly

be denied that, owing to the public position of those who professed it, and above all to the great political preoccupation of the Italians, philosophy has often been disturbed in its purely ideal regions. In short, Italy has been obliged to make her philosophy while she has been engaged in the most strenuous efforts to make herself nationally independent. Two very difficult undertakings these have certainly been. In the attempts to accomplish both ends it has been necessary to consider what would harmonize in many generations that they might be essentially united under certain national conditions. It appears, therefore, that the speculations of those schools and disciples who co-operated effectually in the Italian national movement could not properly develop for political reasons; nor could they exercise upon the minds of foreign speculators, and particularly upon the Positive mind, that critical and conciliating influence to which we have alluded. In order to initiate in a people a movement in certain ideas and studies it sometimes only needs the impulse of a book, of a great public

necessity, the word and authority of one man ; but to extend the movement beyond one province, to all the nation, so that it may promote other movements and inspire literature, art and morals, and make its influence felt upon the doctrines and studies of foreign countries, that one first impulse, or authority of one school, does not suffice. It requires the persistent and united efforts of a studious people, of a hard-working public ; for, the life of institutions, doctrines or schools, follows also the law of other organisms which, although enabled to live through the organs of nutrition alone, require the organs of activity to be in relation to other organisms. Such organs are in this case the propagating power of the press and of public opinion, the activity of criticism, the voice of professors, the attention and the care of students. These are the conditions which in Europe, combined with the genius of the teachers, gave to German thought the importance which, for the same reasons, was formerly attached to the philosophy of Socrates, the school of Alexandria, Scholasticism and Carte-

sianism, and, more recently, the Scotch school. It must be admitted that until lately such conditions were wanting in Italy; and it would be well for those critics who, considering the slow development of Italian philosophy and its remote relations to foreign schools, do not recognize in it either scientific value or, as they say, historical significance, to remember the evils with which Italy has been afflicted for long centuries. If these critics would understand that philosophical systems are not only abstract forms of thought, but living manifestations of the human soul, they would, no doubt, recognize in the civil conditions under which Italian philosophy has already developed, some of the reasons why that nation has not contributed, as it should and could have done, to the movement of European philosophical thought.

## II.

On the other hand, in considering what has been written in Italy upon Positive philosophy it is evident that conditions more or

less extrinsic to philosophical thought, and those very conditions which have contributed to the political reorganization of the country, have also contributed to the movement of thought implied in those writings. The rise of Positivism in Italy is not to be regarded, as it would be in England, as the effect of the harmony between the native mind and some foreign thinkers; but as the adoption of foreign ideas favorable to the liberal spirit, and opposed to theology, to the scholasticism of the clergy, and to political slavery. It has, therefore, been more of a revolution than a development—more of a civil event than a philosophical result. There are many proofs of this. In Italy Positivists are all, or nearly all, ignorant of or opposed to every sort of speculation, including psychological speculation; and, unlike the English, they ignore the history of science in their own country; or, having formerly been of other schools, they hope to find in the new one the reflection of their former doctrines. History does not record this movement of ideas, although Italian Positivism deserves to be quali-

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fied as such, notwithstanding that it lacks unity, consciousness of its own tendency, and rigorous criticism. Italian Positivists generally disagree in everything except in contradicting what they call theology and scholasticism, which they seem to find in almost every form of thought. When requested to state a decided opinion they unconsciously express a materialistic, Hegelian or empirical tendency, everything, in fact, except such a positive mode of thought as results from a strictly logical process of reasoning. In reality, whoever faithfully follows the doctrines of Comte cannot give the terms *experience, law, causality, force* and the like any meaning but that which Comte himself attributed to them in conformity to the definitions of Hume; and when the English enunciate such ideas as their own, and refuse, at the same time, to be called followers of Comte, they seem to be justified in their claims, as the tradition of the speculation from which Comtism was drawn is to be found in their country. But, we ask, by what right—in the name of what tradition—do those Ital-

ians who call themselves Positivists and disciples of Comte appeal to the method of Galileo, who not even incidentally ever thought of the skeptical ideas of that French philosopher; and according to what mode of criticism do phrenologists, and we should almost say physiologists, like Comte and Littré, and decided materialists like Büchner and Moleschott, count so often on Mill, Bain and Spencer, who profoundly dissent from the French views and admit a psychology distinct from biology and from social dynamism? It may be said in reply that these *accidental* differences of doctrine disappear in the wide scope of the experimental method which all these philosophers accept. But history shows that while Galileo started with a natural conception of experience, of observation, and of cause, the premises of Comte involved a negative postulate resulting from previous skepticism and sensualism; a postulate which the English made very productive through the method of internal analysis, and from which the French derived vague scientific and historical generalities, while the

Germans, reaching the conclusions of Comte by a different way—by metaphysics—gave to the negative aspect of philosophy a metaphysical form, as we see even in Feuerbach and Büchner.

The terms *experience*, *experimental method*, *Positive philosophy*, are often used in Italy to denote the doctrines of foreign thinkers for the purpose of contradicting speculators, or, as they call them, *theologians*. They use these terms in but one and the same sense, while they have three different meanings respectively in France, England and Germany. The criticism upon speculation is not, however, as serious in Italy as it should be in order to become a part and condition of science; and in this, also, foreign influence is more injurious than beneficial. One of the effects of many revolutions and political slavery in the past is that almost any foreign idea, method or custom easily attains popularity in that country, and, consequently, the study of foreign doctrines, instead of promoting, by examples and comparisons, freedom in method, and the gradual

and continuous development of national ideas, has profoundly and almost inevitably hindered them. This is due to the fact that Italian students lack one of the most important conditions in pursuing this study—they are not well prepared for it. The only condition on which Italian philosophy might have derived benefit from the examples of foreign philosophy is that the ideas which originated abroad should have become connected with the national mind, not as vague and absolute generalities, but as distinct both in origin and nationality, and directly derived from the whole history of European thought. We fear that this cannot be said to be the case in most of the works on Positivism in Italy. Excepting a few which we have duly examined, they do not clearly or accurately expose the source of the opinions which they express, nor do they explain their relations to the three principal tendencies of Positivism in Europe. Apart from the somewhat loose criticism upon contemporary metaphysics, they do not seem to agree in any respect. They certainly do not

in psychology. Not one of these Positivists has done anything in psychology which can, even in part, be compared, either in accuracy or observation, with what Rosmini, and, more recently, Bain and Spencer and some others, have accomplished. They do not compare with the English in logic, nor have they yet produced a truly scientific treatise on Positive ethics. Notwithstanding so much uncertainty of purpose, and the deficiencies that we have just pointed out, these Positivists claim to constitute a school, properly so called, and believe they have triumphed over metaphysics and theology.

### III.

WE have deemed it necessary to make frankly the foregoing explanations. Positive criticism in Italy is so full of the usual generalities on method, and of the usual declamations against philosophy pure and proper, that to one unfamiliar with the tenor of the writings of foreign Positivists it would be difficult to conceive how, laying aside the sterile nega-

tions with which their doctrines abound, they could attempt the task of establishing a system of psychology, of logic, or of morality. We have pointed out, however, that the work of reconstruction originated in a certain development of Positive thought, particularly manifested in England, where both moral and civil interests and the instinctive desire to examine inner life led to the study of the soul. It is true that these causes would not have been sufficient in themselves, if a certain essentially home tradition had not been combined with the doctrine of Comte; and, as we have shown in the course of our remarks, there has always been this tradition, and of such efficacy that all that is faithful and applicable in Positivism is now represented in the tendency of Positive thought in England.

If, on the contrary, we consider that part in the *Course of Positive Philosophy* and the writings of Littré which relates to the study of the soul, we will see that their method of teaching psychological analysis in terms of biology and social physics is impracticable. We have

already suggested that Comte's denial of mental reflection was the result of doctrines opposing the method of facts. Comte would have been much more consistent and positive if he had pursued, like the English, the method of accurate observation, instead of accepting a principle which transcends, and even denies, the *phenomena alone* which he proposed to investigate. It is most probable that he would thus have renewed a useful study of human consciousness in the Positive school of France without exploding his psychology or social physics.

It cannot be denied that, excluding the subjective method, and the reality of the phenomena which it reveals, the social physics to which Comte attributes the office of completing contemporary science falls to the ground. He considers that the claims which such a science lays to validity are founded on what he calls the *social fact*; a fact resulting, not from the nature of the individual considered separately, but from the action of individuals upon each other, and which is given by the *collective study of the species*. Such would be the phi-

losophy of history founded on a scientific reason; the study of man in his civil and political being, not as an aggregation alone, but as a part of nature, as the effect of deeply impressed and indellible dispositions involved in the action of the race upon the individual. It is necessary, however, for those who, in good faith, admire Comte's Sociology, to bear in mind that the individual has not, in that philosopher's opinion, subjective unity, unity of consciousness; that the rational and moral element by which he is distinguished from other living organisms enter into his being only as transformations of and additions to elements of sensibility. This admitted, man is no longer a true individual; for, the idea of the consciousness or knowledge which the individual has of an energy underlying his own modifications must be discarded with the idea of an intelligent and responsible subject; and if we remove this idea of personal unity, which alone enables us to penetrate the impersonal unity of nature, we must conceive nature to be devoid of productive power, an empty and inactive receptacle of phenomena.



Thus the very phenomena which, in another conception, are gathered in the subject and connected by relations of cause and effect, of passion and action, are in this case conceived to be united merely by relations of contiguity in time and space. We see, then, that with the ideas of consciousness, of force, of cause, and of subject, there are denied in Comte the true relations between internal and external facts. All the scientific field is, therefore, an immense scheme based on sense and memory, and which any skeptic may at option remove from our contemplation.

If such are the conclusions to which Comtism leads, as they certainly are, even if Comte classifies the facts of the various sciences according to their greater or less degree of generality, the only way to conceive those facts as certain unities is to determine the material relations which connect them in time and space. Astronomy, physics, chemistry and physiology are thus distinct as the mass, the structure, and the modes of action vary in bodies, as the material conditions vary in the facts observed; and

biology becomes psychology for Comte, as he believed he discovered in the nervous system the centers and the visible basis of mental functions. But, by this method, nothing further is explained, although there is yet to be given another concrete and palpable unity as the substratum of the *social fact*. Regarded in itself, this cannot be, for Comte, but an abstraction of psychical phenomena in the individual; and studied in its elements, which alone should have a scientific value for this phrenologist, it is again classed under organic and cerebral functions. This is a logical consequence. When individual consciousness ceases, and human facts lose their internal unity, to become identified with other facts in infinite nature, and are then nothing more than nervous impressions, waves, or reflections in the eyes of the psychologist, we cannot see, under the complex form which those facts assume in society and history, any more than a particular adaptation of correlated organisms. The distinction which Comte makes between a *static* and *dynamic* study of living beings, according

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as their intellectual acts are considered, either in the organic conditions on which they depend, or in the use of those acts in leading man to scientific results, seems to be insufficient to prove that social physics should not be treated as a mere appendix to anatomy and physiology. In fact, if a social phenomenon is investigated through the observation of external and sensible life, as Comte appears to insist upon, it cannot, strictly speaking, be distinguishable from the material conditions in which it occurs; if, on the other hand, the social phenomenon is considered in itself and in its subjective being, we cannot but conclude that consciousness lies at the base of sociology and history.

It is clear that as Comte's study reduces man, intellectually and socially, to a physiological fact of particular organisms, or of correlated organisms, nothing worthy of being called moral investigation has a place in the Positive doctrines of France. The English school obviates in a great measure the objections which can logically be based on the foregoing points. It is true that the English phi-

losophers deny the possibility of apprehending immediately the moral act as the effect of our free agency, and try to argue against the idea of an absolute good; but the inquiry into the subjective conditions in which the sentiments of obligation, the ideas of honesty, of right and of law originates marks the moral theory of Mill, Bain and Spencer, as a most important branch of psychology independent of the science of organisms. Recognizing in the nature of the facts of inner life something which distinguishes them from the facts of life in general, English Positivists at least entertain views that we can philosophically criticise in relation to the strict requirements of the experimental method; although they do certainly not establish by their method a pure and proper science of morality. They give a wide scope to ethics, as they apply their theories to the philosophy of history and to the philosophy of a *science of character* which Mill and Bain profess as a doctrine drawn from the more general laws of the mind, with a view to determine "the kind of character produced in conformity to those

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general laws by any set of circumstances, physical and moral." *Ethology*, as they call it, might serve the same purpose in the question of character that mathematical deduction in determining the future position of a planet does in astronomy. Presupposing the fundamental laws of mind, and, to a certain extent, the conditions which modify them, ethology might establish *à priori* the nature and the mode of certain moral *situations*; it being understood that such conclusions would have to be verified from the observation of human nature in our own age and in history. They admit, however, that, while, in astronomy, facts, properly so called, can be deduced, in ethology tendencies, and not facts, can be affirmed, owing to our ignorance of the essential nature of the soul and of the operations of the agencies which modify it. Any one may see how such a science, based on deep psychological knowledge, would benefit practical morality, particularly education, politics and economy; and let us note that, although we believe with Mill that the real causes which modify human character cannot be known, and

admit that our free agency determines to a certain extent the tendency of our actions, but much less powerfully than external circumstances, it is not less true that, of all the Positive thinkers, the English alone can give at least an outline of a science of character, whereas the modifications of human nature which internal analysis alone can reveal are not investigated in the system of Comte, who confines himself to the external observation of organisms and historical facts. Comte's aversion to psychology, and therefore to ethics, extends by virtue of the same principles to the very *art of education* to which the French philosopher thought his principles would be applied with greater and more immediate results.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>For a full exposition of the views pointed out above, see Auguste Comte's *Cours de Philosophie Positive*, I and II. John S. Mill's *Auguste Comte and Positivism*. Littré's *Auguste Comte et la Philosophie Positive*. Mill's *System of Logic*, Book VI, "In the Logic of the Moral Sciences," and chapter V, "Of Ethology." And, particularly, Alexander Bain, on *The Study of Character, Including an Estimate of Phrenology*

IV.

WE think that we have clearly explained why, in the course of this essay, we considered, almost exclusively, the doctrines of English Positivists. Of all the various forms of thought, more or less impressed with the metaphysical spirit which the anti-speculative mind derived from Germany, and with the unproductive theories of Comte on one side, and the vague tendency of Italian Positivism on the other, the English alone follow a path which may lead to the development of whatever good there may be in Positivism. The works of James Mill, J. S. Mill, Bain, Spencer, Lewes, Bailey, Morell and Murphy, and the earlier works of Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Berkeley, Hartley, Erasmus Darwin, and some Scotch writers, constitute a school in which we must recognize and appreciate the value of many very fine analyses, the full exposition of a psychological law, and many useful discoveries, notwithstanding that there is often a lack of impartiality and breadth of inquiry and a certain speculative intuition.

While Comte himself obstructed the highway of science, and subjective observation was compromised in its best results by the too transcendental efforts of the Germans, and the Italians were too deeply engaged in the work of national reconstruction to share harmoniously in the advance of psychology and metaphysics, the English accepted the watchword of France and pursued the Positive path, but, honoring an old tradition, they saved psychology from the wreck of philosophical doctrines. Psychology, in its turn, preserved moral inquiry, seizing, at the same time, the best opportunity to give a powerful impulse to the interrupted course of speculation; the future of which now depends on certain conditions which will never be realized unless the present movement of Positive thought joins issue with the leading question of contemporary philosophy.

## V.

THE movement of thought in free inquiry appeared with the Renaissance and Reformation, but we are only just beginning to realize the



vast field that has been gone over since that epoch. A long series of investigations extends from that time to the present, and, although every one of those investigations has a character of its own, we see them gather and assume historical value of succession in the philosophy of Kant. In Vinci and Bruno, Cartesianism was anticipated, which, in its turn, foreshadowed the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and the mind which for more than three centuries had endeavored to react upon itself does not appear to have fully attained its self-possession until philosophy had been through and beyond the middle terms of the critical sorites. This implies various lines converging to one point, like echoes which resound through the valley and finally meet on the distant mountain. Such is the history of Criticism, which started with a revolt against Aristotelianism, and caused the overthrow of the metaphysics of Christian Wolf, and in the course of which questions preliminary to the final problem have been solved; and it is in this history that we find the prominent philosophers of the Renais-

sance, Galileo and Descartes, Locke and Vico, Berkeley and Hume. The historical necessity of the premises which they gave to the critical sorites is now very well known. In our day the title *Critique of Pure Reason* denotes not only the work of Kant, but expresses an idea which has been made explicit through analysis, and which has given rise to the idea of knowledge in the minds of students; the idea of knowledge dealing with itself and endeavoring to realize itself in the essential conditions of its own being. But, in order that Criticism should attain to this idea, and that Reason should see in it its own reflection, it was necessary to remove one by one the obstacles that philosophers themselves had put in the way to the right conception of things. From the close of the Middle Ages to the rise of Cartesianism, the problem of Criticism implied two capital points: namely, the independence of thought from the objective world which hampered its free action, and the methodical and rational attitude which the mind should assume before the objective and subjective orders. This is the reason why the critical

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movement as expressed by Bruno and Luther resembled at first the desperate struggle of a prisoner to escape, whereas with Galileo and Descartes it was like the calm and peaceful mind of one who, being free from external obstacles, finds in himself the object of his study.

In the Middle Ages the mind conceived internal and external nature under the pressure of authority and faith, and it was the task of the Renaissance and the Reformation to criticise this authority and faith. The mind, however, needed laws, criterion and guidance, all of which it had to find in itself and in that immediate relation to things which is part of its nature. The criticism of method which followed the Reformation, and with which it is logically connected, like the second period of the Renaissance in Europe, took its name from the *experience* which Galileo recognized as an experience of the senses and of the external world, and Descartes as a psychical and internal experience. At this point the problem of philosophy became peculiarly compli-

cated. It had so far been a problem of method in the most obvious sense of the word, an investigation of the path and the attitude which the mind should have assumed in its endeavors to comprehend things. Galileo and Descartes had concluded that that path could have been only observation, and that attitude but the immediate reference of the mind to its own objects and to itself. But, for Galileo, the problem was solved on grounds of sensuous experience alone: he thought that, when regarded in itself, there was revealed in nature the secret of its laws; whereas in Descartes' mind the immediate opposition of thought to itself transformed, since then, a question of method into a question of essence, the criticism of *cognitions* into a criticism of the *understanding*. It was the question of how science should begin and how science is possible. He did not, however, and could not, go much further. The problem which he himself raised was ever beyond his reach, owing to the many other questions which resulted from it, and although he appears to have dimly perceived the grounds

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upon which the main problem could have been solved, he failed to grapple successfully with a question which was to remain open for so long. Descartes had explicit knowledge of the attempts which Criticism had made before his time, so that the whole problem of method was resumed in his system. But, without fully realizing it, he initiated a certain course of thought which directly connects his philosophy with that of subsequent speculators. Descartes thus marks, in the history of philosophy, not so much the dawn as the close of a new era. In his speculations there is implied a spirit of contradiction which, in spite of himself, carries him along toward the vast field upon which are still arrayed the contending parties in the great question of subject and object, of thought and being. Considering at bottom the distinction between these two phases of life, and the imperfect way in which Descartes himself appreciated it, we may explain why critics doubted the logical value of his famous enthememe, and how he went beyond it so soon in order to rise to the idea of God,

and the often contradictory reasons which he gave of this and other innate ideas. Those who believe they find in Descartes reasons for denying the progress of philosophy, contrasting the direct and infallible results of the reform initiated by Galileo with the hesitating tenor of Descartes' writings, should bear in mind how much the vital question of philosophy had changed since his time, and what a long step had been taken in scientific reflection to recognize that in all knowledge and in every principle thought recognizes itself.

The novelty of Descartes' system was, therefore, that the mind realizes thought as one of its original facts. The inquiry initiated in the Renaissance had been carried to this point, and, while he could look back over the ground which the human mind had traversed to reach it, there was a region beyond it yet to be explored. Reflecting upon itself both as subject and object, as being and fact, thought was not then as it appeared in later times in the analysis of Kant. It was, as it had been con-

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ceived in the Middle Ages, a matter which Criticism had not as yet seriously taken up in connection with innate and immutable elements. It is not surprising, then, if Descartes, after unconsciously indulging in such speculations on thought, outgrew them equally unconsciously, believing he thus opened a way to the solution of the problem of being both in the subjective and objective world. It is known that Malebranche's theory of occasional causes, and Spinoza's definitions, are the results of certain points in the old philosophy, points which had not been sufficiently valued, and which escaped the investigations of the great critic of Turraine. The question of the opposition between the two terms of the Cartesian dualism, the *substantia cogitans* and the *substantia extensa*, which the two great metaphysicians thought they had disposed of forever, was, in fact, to be raised again under another form in the criticism of Kant, in case he should have shown that this opposition was not the same that he introduced between the ideal and

the real, between the *noumenon* and *phenomenon*, but was all in the latter.<sup>1</sup>

The problem of method became the problem of the very content of thought, and, as such, it was transmitted from Descartes to Locke, Leibnitz, Berkeley, Hume and Kant. The French philosopher decided that we have knowledge through the medium of ideas conceived as innate forms of mind. It was therefore necessary to resolve ideas into their elements in order to find out what thought was in itself; and, as in the previous doctrines the problem of the being of ideas was combined with the problem of their origin, it was necessary to explain their origin in relation to the various orders of knowledge. To the Cartesian criticism of method succeeded, therefore, Locke's criticism of ideas. But in the way in which the latter expressed the problem there was from the beginning an error which made his analysis insufficient. The path which Descartes had unconsciously pur-

<sup>1</sup>Schopenhauer, *Parerga und Paralipomena*, I, II. Dr. Julius Frauenstadt, *Brief über die Schopenhauer'sche Philosophie*. Leipzig, F. A. Brokhaus, 1854.



sued should have led him not only to the study of thought in itself, but also to the essential conditions upon which thought refers to objects. But to examine ideas was to examine *cognitions* and not the act of knowing; it was not really to study knowledge in itself, but in one of its particular aspects, and it was a mode of analysis which might have led to a vicious circle if, in the first empirical elements in which originated this or that idea, there was already the impress and the act of the understanding. This is the history of the investigations of Locke. He undertook the task of criticism as a study of knowledge, and sought in vain the origin of knowledge in ideas. But, while he thus destroyed some prevailing artificial notions of thought, he made the mistake of not perceiving that, after solving the empirical data of knowledge, there was still thought as their formal condition, and of reducing the mind to a merely passive recipient. Leibnitz opposed him, and prepared, in his *New Essays*, the full synthesis of the passive and active aspects of knowledge, a synthesis in which lay the real merit of Kant.

The critical controversy thus resulted in a series of contrasts which prevailing in turns were to bring it to its close. To the contrast of authority with reason, of the *à priori* method with that of experience, of the sense with the intellect, succeeded the more profound contrast of thought with itself. Locke's analysis and the *Essays* of Leibnitz had revealed the content of the understanding; but the fault in Locke's doctrine, was, as we know, in not distinguishing in the understanding between matter and form, in not considering that the one implies the mode and act of knowing when we investigate it in the immediate knowledge of things, in which case its form is given us by the senses. The unconscious passage from thought to being, as we noticed in the speculations of Descartes, was now *explicitly* realized by the great critic, but under the imperfect and even unscientific form of the Sensualism of Locke. If the mind forms its notion with elements of sensibility, and sense never penetrates by itself beyond the phenomenal, it was as well to attribute to subjective appearances, as Locke did, a subject-

ive value, as it was to go futher and deny in those appearances any relation to the real. The terms of this double inference are given by Berkeley and Hume. The phenomenal idea of the Bishop of Cloyne is no more at bottom than the sensible representation of Locke; but, as Kant justly remarks, he does not distinguish the cognition from the mode of cognizing; and while he confines thought to itself in relation to the objective world, he leaves it free in the immediate knowledge of the *I* and of the absolute. By David Hume alone are the analyses of Locke and Berkeley completed. With his more critical and rigorous genius, he suggests a doubt of the correspondence of the object with the representative idea. He carries the theories of Berkeley further, solving the *I* into a series of internal states, and, as Locke does not grasp in his analysis the true synthesis of formal conceptions, nor that of causality, he reduces these syntheses to various orders of impressions involved in the unity of consciousness. In him we begin to see Kant and nearly the criticism of *à priori* synthetical judgments. But the

empirical path, in which the sensualism of the *Essay* had turned the English, never led them to a full comprehension of the psychological problem; it did not raise them above the content of experience to its true being, and did not induce them to ask what it was and how the receptivity and unifying activity could be which they attributed to the spirit in perception.<sup>1</sup>

This last aspect of the critical inquiry was first discussed in Germany. It had been suggested by Leibnitz, and was clearly outlined by Kant. Considering that aspect under an incomplete form, the Scotch school anticipated too

<sup>1</sup> In reference to Berkeley and Hume, see particularly George Lewes' *Biographical History of Philosophy*; Bain's *Mental and Moral Science*, Book III, chapter vii; Theories of the Material World. As to the relations of the English critics to Kant, whom we wish to particularly note, see Erdmann's *Geschichte der Philosophie*, Vol. II, page 269. Berlin, 1870. Students know that the study of Berkeley has lately been taken up in England, America, and also in Germany. The Positivists agree with him on some points, which confirms the relations which we establish between empirical doctrines and criticism previous to Kant. See, also, Dühring, *Kritische Geschichte der Philosophie von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, Berlin, 1869.

much a revival of objective investigation, while they should have followed the latest conclusions of criticism upon knowledge. After Berkeley and Hume the inquiry of representative ideas, upon which that school rested, could be said to be mature, and it would, perhaps, have sufficed against the conclusions of the negative philosophy if, with those two philosophers, the last period of Criticism, which Reid never fully apprehended, had not been initiated. The fact that it remained outside proves that the results of the Scotch school were less important than might have been expected. It was premature, as it preceded Kant, to which it should logically have succeeded, whereas Vico, almost a century before him, initiated the mode of historical inquiry which, latterly, and especially after Hegel, became the truest form which the study of the human spirit assumed in contemporaneous philosophy.

Thus we see included in one speculative movement the various aspects which the question of Knowledge assumed from the revival of Learning to Kant, in whom this question

seems to culminate for the present, at least. *The Critique of Pure Reason* is the point to which the different paths pursued by the predecessors of the great German thinker converge, so that he can from his standpoint survey and distinguish the respective tendencies of speculation which led to it. Kant fully comprehended the question which he brought to a climax, but even this philosopher was not beyond the influence of the common law, and he did not apprehend the speculative exigencies of his and later times. The light which criticism in the past had thrown on his path was eclipsed by his negative conclusions, beyond the shadow of which he could never go, so that German philosophy could not see and profit by the further developments of Science.

## VI.

It is not our purpose to examine the *Critique of Pure Reason* and much less the comments of Criticism. We have referred, in a general way, to the history of Criticism previous

to Kant in order to show some relations of the age of criticism to the Positive philosophy of the present, notwithstanding that such relations are not as yet sufficiently appreciated by the philosophers of England. Kant terminated the criticism of knowledge, going beyond the rude and partial aspect in which it had been considered in the eighteenth century, and investigating in one full conception of the spirit all that Locke and Leibnitz, Berkeley and Hume had partially affirmed. He demonstrated that *experience*, as such, is not possible without something which, it is true, we receive, but which we also give, and that the unity of sensible data is accomplished in the spirit, and under the form of knowledge; this, and its product, science, are produced by the harmony of that which thinks and that which is thought. The full perception of this truth based on reason, and to which the human mind had attained through a demonstrative series, was Kant's true merit. His mistake consisted in fearing too much the empiricism which had preceded him, and in removing the two terms of the fact of knowledge, the *I* and

the object, so as to declare the relation between the two phenomenal. Criticism led him beyond the limits of the reasonable and the natural, for which he duly suffered. The theory of knowledge which, since Descartes, Criticism had fondly entertained, doing away with old superstitions and academical notions of innate ideas, was about to be established, when Kant's analysis reduced it to a cold and impalpable abstraction. In the unproductiveness of this abstraction, the last remnant of Criticism, lies the cause, we think, that has vitiated, from its origin, German philosophy, since Kant and the Positive school. They are both branches of the same trunk, with the difference that, while Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, starting from the negative conclusions of Kant, reserve the progress of this Criticism and partially cultivate it, Comte, on the contrary, proclaiming the *phenomenon* as the sole object of science, moves also from Kant, but, as the offspring of Sensualism and French materialism, he sees in phenomena only elements of experience and empiricism, and drifts, in consequence, towards Hume and



Locke. This is true of all the forms which his system has assumed in contemporary philosophy. If we accept German Positivism, which is at the bottom metaphysical, the sociology of the French, denying interior observation proper, amounts, as we have shown, to an historical mechanism, and the logical formalism of Mill, and the doctrines of Bain, Spencer, and Lewes, are brought back to the Sensualism of Locke, Hume and Hartley. We thus finally explain how and why the first effect of the Positive spirit introduced among the English was to follow the tradition of the schools of the eighteenth century, and how and why such a tendency of thought was implied in the empirical premises of Auguste Comte.

## VII.

THE movement of Positive thought implies, therefore, a double tendency. On one hand, the Positivists confine themselves to purely experimental research, without realizing how much the very science which they teach owes to

philosophy and criticism, or how much has been added to the theory of mind since Vico and Kant; on the other, they labor under the disadvantage of the Kantian postulate that phenomena are merely appearances, and of the postulate that the ideas of cause, subject and force give no validity to human reasoning. This ignorance, combined with a certain apprehension of their own negations, causes the Positivists to hold the most dangerous and certainly the least fruitful doctrines of the speculative mind, while it refutes the most durable and sound results which have been attained in the intellectual life of Europe since the time of Descartes. We have shown that, confining their observations to phenomena alone, Positivists cannot properly understand them and cannot give a truly scientific value to the results of their observations. This is owing to the fact that the negations of Comte and Hume lead them to consider those phenomena as empty and cold abstractions. This insufficiency is apparent throughout their philosophy, but more especially in that part of their system which refers to moral nature,

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through the analysis of which we realize ever more the true nature of inner life. The phenomena of the moral world involve, let it be said, that *something* which enables us to see all other phenomena as implying forces the results of which all converge to that which transcends experience. An analysis of pure phenomena and generalities, which substitutes the temporal and spacial relations of facts for the action of real causes, and shows abstract symmetries of antecedents and consequents for the living and active laws of nature, will give us the statistics and the inventory, as it were, of internal facts, but neither a science of the mind nor a system of morality proper. For, man cannot be solved into parts, nor can his being be reduced to a mathematical formula, but, taken as he is, even as he is presented to our consciousness and as we know him through history, he must be considered in the living unity of his spirit.

It is not surprising if other more manifest contradictions of Positivism follow from those just pointed out. Those who follow what they

call a scientific method which leads beyond the proper province of criticism and of natural science, who reject speculative conclusions and care only for bare facts, are, in spite of themselves, impelled to speculation when they realize that the foundations of those very facts are the difficult points in the problems of being and life. While Comte excluded the notions of force and cause from the province of science, a great work of synthesis raised the scientific mind ever more above the bare facts in its quest of the ideal, of the necessary, and of that objective reality which is attested more every day by the relations which physics and mathematics discover between the world of spirit and that of matter. Philosophy, that which grows out of scientific investigation, is the constant aspiration of man. Meanwhile the controversy between those who base their views on experience and those who rely on reason, properly so called, continues; and it is just this antagonism between naturalists and metaphysicians that prevents the seed of speculation from developing as it should, and bearing the fruit of the long

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cultivation of thought in the past. The vague consciousness which Positivism has of its traditional relations to philosophy makes it at once *negative* and *dogmatical*. We say negative, because it prevents it from appreciating the true results of interior observation; dogmatical, because the speculative course into which it is turned by an inexorable logic is wanting in the sure criteria which are required for the investigation of principles and methods and for the organization of knowledge.

## VIII.

It is important, therefore, that Positivism should become clearly conscious of the past of philosophy. From the fifteenth century to Kant, Criticism endeavored, as we have seen, to solve a vital problem, pursuing a series of researches which might be considered in the same sense that we would the middle term or one argumentation, and the consciousness which underlies that course of inquiry does not seem to attain to its culmination until all those terms

have been implied in scientific reflection. Kant halts at the last of those terms, at the idea of knowledge in the attempt to comprehend itself; but while he lingers over the track of Hume and Berkeley, and admits the *noumenon* in opposition to the *phenomenon*, he does not go beyond the critical aspect of the problem. Since his time philosophy has not made any advance. Powerless under the enchantment placed over it by the sage of Königsberg, philosophy dwells on the phenomenon, trying to find in it an explanation of both the world of ideas and that of facts. It is not too much to say that true progress in philosophy can be expected only on two conditions. We must go beyond the problem the solution of which appears to have been the sole object of Criticism, and we must have full and explicit knowledge of its results. While in most philosophical schools the relation of thought to things, internal causality, the truths of reason and the moral absolute are denied, not by way of criticism, but on grounds of experience, and according to the Positive method; while this

equivocation of names and things lasts, and in our errors we are unconscious of traditions—it will be vain for us to hope that thought may come out of the narrow limits of empiricism to recognize science in that which relates to the higher topics of thinking. The influence of Criticism under which we have grown has stunted in us the sense of the real and of the natural; it has become so much a part of our disposition that we ordinarily pursue a critical course without fully realizing that we do; and we are confident that we are positive and experimental, while we are in reality skeptical and negative. We must sever our connection with this critical movement if we wish to judge it, and attain to results which have not been, and may never be, reached through its method. But this progressive step cannot be taken unless we appreciate the relations of Criticism to contemporary thought, and especially to the Positive school of the day.

## IX.

IN the course of our discussion we have noted more than once how the influence of Criticism, latent in the Positive method, causes a theory to be erroneously established on the data of experience. This is especially evident in the doctrines concerning the will, consciousness, ideas and good, and it is to be particularly observed in the views of the English philosophers who, objecting to many negative points of Comtism, have formed a broader conception of psychological observation. But we must bear in mind that the revival of the empirical doctrines of the eighteenth century could only have had the effect of basing psychology still more exclusively on what investigation through the senses would bring to light, in a country where, since Bacon and Hobbes, objective and metaphysical inquiries have almost always been pursued in accordance with experimental tradition. This is proved in the history of inductive ethics, as we have outlined in the second part of this work. While the schools of Hobbes and



of Locke were engaged on one side, and the so-called school of intuitionists, Hutcheson and the Scotch, on the other, in the great controversy on disinterested sentiments and moral ideas, none of those philosophers, excepting Clarke, Butler and Wollaston, laid aside the question of feelings and affections, to find in absolute reason the principles of morality. Yet, such an idea, which is recognized in us as a datum of fact and undeniably of consciousness, would have been regarded by the intuitionists as a crowning achievement worthy of the school which claims to explain morality by the theory of experience.

## X.

As a *résumé* of the course of contemporary Positive thought, we may say that, proceeding from Criticism, Positivism has accepted its negations and adapted them finely to the Sensualism and doubt which prevailed in the eighteenth century; and, while it has claimed to proceed by the experiential method and by a study of facts, it has accepted the words *facts* and *experience* in a

sense which foreshadows the skepticism to which previous doctrines were to lead. The spirit of contradiction, which the new school has inherited as the effect of essentially different tendencies of thought, has always been its great defect. The occasion of this school was a time of mental weariness, and it was produced by the process of reasoning which developed from Descartes to Kant, and was revived in Hume and Locke. A negative disposition of the times, and an anxiety to inquire into facts, to discover their laws and apply them so that the constantly increasing wants of public and private life could be supplied by the progress of science, were favorable conditions for the development of the new tendency. But, although the new mode of thought at first seemed opportune to those who urged facts as the antidote of theories, it ceased to be so to many when it was seen that even the exclusive study of facts led inevitably to theories; and although at first it sufficed to speak vaguely of experience and of experimental method to satisfy those who opposed metaphysics, it was necessary, in later times,

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to expose the postulates, the bounds and the efficacy of that method in order to satisfy serious and cautious minds. The change was not brought about by any strong movement in opposition to the new doctrine; it was the effect of the slow, but efficacious and inexorable, work of thought, which saw, from the position to which a certain course of inquiry led, that a true organism and form were yet to be given to Knowledge. How much and what the Positivists have contributed to the performance of the task, we trust we have comprehensively shown in these pages. The conception of the phenomenon, not as a living and causative reality in spirit and matter, but as an empty appearance, accessible to us through the senses, has made it impossible for that school to establish psychology, morality, the science of right, sociology and physics so that they would explain the true causes and laws of the *bare facts* which constitute the subject-matter of those sciences. We have shown the result of their method. They have been engaged in researches without the guidance of principles, without certainty as to the end of

their endeavors. They have discovered facts through fine analysis, but they have not shown the faculty of putting those facts in scientific synthesis. They have both denied and affirmed to such an extent that any one under their influence might easily become a rude and powerless critic, whereas the method which they claim to pursue should make one an impartial observer. In fine, it seems unquestionable that, underlying the expressions of the Positive mode of thought, there are elements of philosophy which make every branch of science congenial, and the empirical element which, unopposed, might make it fruitless in the highest departments of Knowledge.

The results of prevailing doctrines confirm this statement. The English, who represent the best side of Positivism in Europe, do not, as we have seen, go beyond Hume. Their knowledge is most accurate in details, but it is nothing more than an improvement of the principle of induction advocated by Bacon. The sociology of Comte is still the vague suggestion of a method, and remains to be de-

veloped into a true science. Finally, the materialism of all countries, with a very few exceptions, is the revival of the materialism of the eighteenth century, and does not recognize the most serious results of Criticism; while absolute Idealism is so exhausted that it almost exclusively confines itself within the limits of history. There is, no doubt, a profound disturbance in science, which, at present, appears to be irremediable; it is in the functions of assimilation and production, so that the real principle of phenomena cannot be seen behind the data of experience which science seems to accept almost exclusively. This shortsightedness is greatly due to the deep spirit of criticism, which prevents science from penetrating far enough into facts to realize their most vital points. There is certainly the need of a remedy, which we cannot find outside of a doctrine which will assume the Positive tradition of Kant without countenancing his negations—a doctrine which will rise above criticism without disregarding its best results, which may help to form one conception implying the inte-

gration of the totality of the spiritual relations converging into consciousness.

## XI.

THE question of the course which is to be pursued in the future is most important, inasmuch as the movement of scientific thought bears upon public life. The old Europe of privileges and divine right has tottered and fallen, and upon the ideas of nationality and equality have arisen new states. The precautions which had been prescribed to thought in the Middle Ages have one by one been subjected to criticism. Art, literature and customs have deviated from the traditional path. The very force of the new impetus annihilated the old; but that which was old, and supported by the traditions of long ages, weakened and retreated before that stern and free spirit of inquiry which marked the Reformation and the Encyclopedia, until the human mind was brought face to face with the most terrible fact—the events of 1789. The French movement followed those of a similar nature in England

and America; but, compared to these movements, the French revolution was one of those violent shocks which hinder the slower, but more efficacious, work of nature in the social world. The cause of it is to be found in the French nature, which is the least apt to make profound and durable changes, and which has been, and perhaps still is, the most valid instrument of revolution in Europe. The consequences of that revolution have been sufficiently realized in subsequent history. From the barbarous and instinctive policy of Napoleon the First to the time of the foolish vengeance of the treaties of 1815, from the movements of 1812 and from 1831 to 1848, from the last renovations in Italy to the war in Lombardy, the history of Europe presents a series of unexpected and confused, and often contradictory, movements, in which the authority of principles has almost always been without the sanction of facts. Never before had ideas, which have since been trampled upon, been invoked with more fervor. Both the people and the princes, in the face of violent and

arbitrary measures, promised remedies implied in some doctrine. Even France, in 1831 and 1849, remained passive while the principle of *non-intervention* was violated; and not long since she attacked, in Germany, the same national right and independence which a few years before she had sustained and defended in Italy. It is also noteworthy that, while much was justly said concerning the rights of the people, nearly all the principal movements in the cause of liberty and independence in Europe could only be exercised in the name of the irrevocable necessity of the *accomplished fact*. It was by the mere barbarous force of events that society was modified; but the solemn principles which regulate social relations have not yet received sufficient authority to penetrate to the foundations of society, in order that the impetus of social events may be properly checked.

The influence of Positivism, besides manifesting itself in Political life, begins to pervade the home atmosphere and society at large. The spirit of criticism has penetrated deeper than it would seem from the way in which it has pro-



duced so many changes in social forms. Along with a change in the conception of authority, and the weakening, if not almost extinguishing, of faith in the ideal, thus corrupting the artistic sentiment, and with a profound change in customs and manners, there has been a change in the relations of the collective man and in the harmony of the faculties of the individual. History proves that new cravings in which originate new individual wants, and which are an incentive to social disturbances, are generally the consequence of changes in our social relations. The cities, in which we live by the thousands and millions, engaged in hard work through the day, and seated in rooms artificially heated, or in unwholesome taverns in the evening, many of us without home or shelter, uncertain of the morrow, without faith, and beyond the soothing influences of nature, gradually destroy in us the keen sense of nature and of reality, and tend to make us lead a restless and, not seldom, guilty life.

It should not be ignored that the very doctrine which applied the latest results of criti-

cism to science and philosophy threatens society with the extreme consequences of communism and socialism; especially in France, where the authority of facts has always prevailed much more absolutely than elsewhere. As the reader knows, Auguste Comte promised, in his last work, a civil reconstruction on the principles of St. Simon and Fourier. We all remember, besides, how efforts have been made to realize this *Positive Utopia* in Paris and throughout France under the régime of the Commune. These are, for the present, merely symptoms, but they may be the symptoms of a tidal wave which may some day submerge us. Nor can society avert it without a gradual modification of its institutions; for, social movements are also consequences of the universal law which transforms all things, and it is for science to discover its cause in order to prevent, if possible, its most fearful effects, allowing nature to take its efficacious course without dangerous interruptions from revolutionary movements. The lower classes have improved, and begin to see that social advantages should be more equitably

enjoyed, and we can certainly not be indifferent to their claims. But reform cannot be confined to the institutions, for enough has been destroyed in the orders of faith, science and art; *something* must be substituted for all that has been taken away, and this *something* we will find through the proper study of nature and consciousness, the most solemn and sacred wants of which must absolutely be satisfied. Let us hope that the interest now manifested in this question is the indication of a movement of thought which, following ultimately the right course, will solve the great religious, philosophical and moral problems which have so much weight on the future of man.



